Writing for Publication

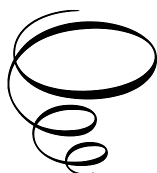
Writing for Publication:

A Performance Enhancement Guidebook for Human Services Professionals

By

James K. Luiselli

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



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PREFACE

You may have read or heard the statement, “I hate writing but love having written.” It summarizes succinctly the attitude of many people, namely that the outcome of writing is far more enjoyable than the required behavior. About writing, William F. Buckley Jr., who published 52 books and countless magazine pieces and newspaper columns, claimed in *Overdrive: A Personal Documentary* (1983), “I do not like to write, for the simple reason that writing in extremely hard work, and I do not ‘like’ hard work” (p. 77). Sports writer Red Smith equated writing to sitting in front of a typewriter and opening a vein. Kurt Vonnegut, in his inimitable style, was reported to have said that to write effectively, you have to demonstrate a type of demented attention. I could go on with similar remarks from accomplished authors but the message is clear: writing is not easy and good writing is even harder whatever the publication venue.

My objective in this guidebook to appeal to human services professionals who want to write and publish in their respective disciplines. If the guidebook succeeds in purpose and direction, you will be motivated to implement a strategic writing plan toward achievable goals, satisfy a desire to reach the professional community, and add a new dimension to your practice. Some of my recommendations are steadfast with little wiggle room whereas others are flexible depending on your unique circumstances and preferences. Just about everything presented to you in the guidebook has to be self-managed, hence personal choice and flexibility play a vital role.

Many people and places prompted my writing journey. I am especially indebted to the early influences of Jerry Martin, Andrew Wheeler, John Lutzker, Paul Touchette, Carol Helfen, Van Westerveldt, and Gene Buchman. The Walter E. Fernald School, Goddard College, Behavioral Intervention Project, Boston University, and Perkins School for the Blind will forever hold a special place in my heart. Thank you to David Marholin II, Michel Hersen, Johnny Matson, and Nirbhay Singh for serving as role models and granting me many opportunities to write and publish.

Finally, with love and devotion, I dedicate this guidebook to my parents, Christine and Jack, my wife Tracy, and my children, Gabrielle and Thomas. This is the family who taught the most important life lessons, inspired, and showed me what it really means to pay attention.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Practitioners from the disciplines of education, psychology, psychiatry, social work, counselling, and organizational consulting help many people, have important things to say, but frequently are unsure about, inexperienced with, or intimidated by the pragmatics of publishing their work. *Writing for Publication: A Performance Enhancement Guidebook for Human Services Professionals* provides the tools for successful writing and publishing based on principles of adult learning, behavioral psychology, and self-management. Chapters orient the reader to the advantages of and perceived obstacles to writing for publication, explain how practice adjustments can create publication opportunities, and present strategic steps that promote writing proficiency and achievement of publication objectives. The guidebook contributes to an overlooked but vital element of professional practice and is performance focused, written in user-friendly language, and adaptable to the demands of busy practitioners.

What appears in the guidebook is the accumulation of experiences from my 45-year career as a psychologist, author, editor, and reviewer. The contents represent what I have learned about writing for publication from the perspective of a primarily practicing and non-academic professional (although I have held adjunct positions and often guest lecture at colleges and universities). I know first-hand the challenges facing human services practitioners and understand a reluctance to consider yet alone engage in the behavior of writing for publication. You, the reader, will judge whether my advice is convincing and useful.

By way of introduction, I was fascinated with writing from an early age. At around 10- or 11-years old, I recall being attracted to newspapers and magazines, the page layouts, and headlines followed by stories of the day. I fabricated "news from the neighborhood" documents, handwritten on notepaper, then typed, copied, and distributed to homes on my street. It took

a few years for my love of books to evolve but in due course, I was hooked on good writing and imagined myself an author one day.

It was during high school that I began receiving positive feedback from teachers about my writing. An adequate student, I made good grades, mostly the result of performing well on written assignments such as book reports and related projects. Teachers commented "You express yourself well" and "Good choice of words," intermixed with remarks such as, "Jim, I would like to see your strong written work also on tests." These appraisals were gratifying and I was drawn to writing, much of it above my head at the time, as examples, *The Cantos* by Ezra Pound and Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. After finishing high school, I completed a post-graduate year at private school where my writing pursuits blossomed, composing poems published in our student-run literary magazine, *The Jabberwocky*. Now, the writing flame was ignited and firmly established.

My intended major upon entering college was journalism but shifted after taking a few introductory psychology courses. I was especially intrigued with clinical psychology and the dedication toward helping people in distress, curious about the circumstances that caused their life problems. How do psychologists help them, I wondered, and is there evidence of success? Course syllabi contained many seminal texts but also journal articles that piqued my interest. First, these articles described research that reported the results of treatments and therapies with clients. The articles were descriptive, presented a research rationale, summarized findings, and discussed methodology and outcomes. I saw that many of the authors on articles appeared in several journals, there were distinct writing styles, and readers could request copies or "reprints" (keep in mind that this was a time before electronic communications and PDF files). So, I reasoned, that by becoming a psychologist, you could improve people's lives, perform research, and WRITE about and PUBLISH the results. By sophomore year, I changed my major to psychology.

Onward to graduate school, first a masters-degree program in clinical child psychology, then doctoral studies in a hybrid education-psychology program. What I remember most from those years was professors who functioned as clinicians, conducted research, and wrote for publication routinely and successfully. I was invited to participate in projects, attended seminars outside of classes, received a research assistant scholarship, and

began to follow my own interests by initiating clinical studies. The defining word for these experiences was *mentorship* provided by skilled professionals who not only taught me what to do but reinforced my efforts. Though focused on the positive, their feedback was not always pleasant and many times my first-draft manuscripts came back with sections marked in red ink and comments such as, "You need to re-write this entire paragraph, it is unclear and confusing." Uniformly, this advice was instructive and formed some early and indispensable writing skills I have maintained to this day.

Both during and the immediate years following graduate school, I experimented with several tactics to improve my writing. One thing I did was study the style of authors I admired. I attended to certain words that were appealing, sentence structure, and the best arrangement of paragraphs to aid comprehension. Articles that impressed me most were photocopied, noteworthy sections underscored in yellow highlighter, and documents filed away in a "Reference" folder. Also, I drafted manuscripts of projects I had completed, none of them intended for publication submission, rather serving as writing practice I hoped would evolve into more polished pieces. When it was time to submit a manuscript I thought worthy of publication, I went with high-probability journals where articles similar to mine appeared. After a few successes, I broadened my choice of journals and used the comments from editorial reviews to hone my research and writing skills. Collaboration with other graduate students, faculty, and advisors further fueled productivity. At the conclusion of my masters and doctoral programs, I had authored or co-authored about a dozen empirical studies in peer-reviewed journals. During those years I also gained experience writing review articles, position papers, and book chapters, additional publication outlets I fully embraced.

My career path following graduate school consisted of fulfilling licensing and credentialling requirements, engaging in full time practice, and acquiring positions at several human services organizations. I learned rather quickly that clinical activity, client care, and conducting research could be integrated and indeed, such synthesis was a key factor for writing and publication success. I began, too, studying the behavior of professional authors and the advice they offered in books found in the popular marketplace, notably *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* by Stephen King (2000), *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* by Anne

Lamott (1995), and *On Writing Well* by William Zinser (1990). Later chapters in the guidebook explain the learning principles behind the writing habits of these and other mainstream authors.

Another routine that developed for me, also detailed in subsequent chapters, was the trial-and-error process of submitting manuscripts for publication, responding to editorial reviews (not always favorable), preparing revisions and resubmissions, and cataloging commonly cited writing deficiencies I needed to change. To this day, I consider the always humbling remarks of reviewers as “free advice” that should not be dismissed as a source of performance enhancement.

Over many years, I started presenting writing workshops to human services professionals at conferences and in courses. For example, when serving as Director of Training for a clinical psychology internship program, one of the seminars within the professional development track was writing for publication as a component of practice dissemination. Content and materials from these presentations and seminars eventually appeared in a journal article (Luiselli, 2010) and book chapters (Luiselli, 2017; Luiselli et al., 2023), now fully elaborated in this guidebook.

From the verbal and written feedback I have received from students, practitioners, and other readers, several common questions arose which I think frame any writing guide, summarized below.

Can anyone become a good and productive writer? Short answer, yes, but with qualifications. Motivation is one prerequisite, a desire to communicate fluently, understanding the impact of the written word, and respecting the influence that language has on knowledge acquisition. A love of good writing and how to achieve it may take time, as it did for me, but without it, becoming a proficient writer is unlikely no matter the instruction you receive.

Second, good writing is the product of reading, or as Stephen Pinker (2014) concluded, “Writers acquire their technique by spotting, savoring, and reverse-engineering examples of good prose” (p. 12). Robust reading of esteemed authors opens our eyes to words, grammar, style, and other writing exemplars that transmit onto our pages. Dedicated reading of the professional literature as a preparation step within a strategic writing plan is covered extensively in Chapter 6.

And what about natural talent: are the best writers born or created? Put another way, do some people have certain organic attributes that attract them to writing or make it easier for them to master writing skills? I do think there are congenital factors at play, as evident in other performance domains. Many athletes, in illustration, can be coached to perform better but not at the level of "super stars." If, like me, you are a jazz aficionado, you know that it is not possible to teach the idiosyncratic musical abilities of Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, and Thelonious Monk. Nonetheless, a certain degree of talent can be nurtured and brought to a high level.

What is the secret of good writing? The answer to this question is that there is no secret, mystical qualities, or tricks responsible for writing prowess. Inspiration alone, waiting to be in the right mood, and spontaneous bouts of creativity do not get the work done. Similarly, thinking about writing is not an action, or to paraphrase author Ray Bradbury, "You can't try to do things, you simply must do them." Another author, Bonnie Friedman (1994), said it this way: "Successful writers are not the ones who write the best sentences. They are the ones who keep writing. They are the ones who discover what is most important and strangest and most pleasurable in themselves, and keep believing in the value of their work, despite the difficulties" (p. xiii).

What accounts for writing success is *discipline*—sitting down (or, standing up if you prefer this position) and engaging in the behavior of putting words on paper. Planned writing is no different from going on daily runs in preparation for an upcoming road race, practicing a musical instrument before a recital, and studying for a credentialling examination. Clearly, there are obstacles to writing for publication (Chapter 3) that occasion avoidant behavior (Chapter 13) but there are ways to overcome them (Chapters 7 and 8). The discipline required to write effectively, it turns out, can be taught and mastered if you are receptive to a few non-negotiable self-management strategies.

How can a practitioner be expected to write and publish? Context has everything to do with how we behave and writing for publication is no different. What I focus on in this guidebook are the demands of human services practitioners that realistically challenge *but do not prevent* writing and publishing from becoming a valued professional pursuit. Recognizing

what writing for publication accomplishes (Chapter 2) is the first step in analyzing conditions that can be manipulated to achieve performance objectives. Becoming an effective writer does not happen by chance or luck, instead is the product of adjusting circumstances and contingencies operating in the course of service delivery. The sources of control over writing and not writing can be identified and with close analysis, rearranged to promote the desired behavior (writing) and eliminate the undesired behavior (not writing). Thus, practitioners can write and publish if there is motivation to do so AND they implement purposeful practice changes.

Here is a personal example of practitioner-driven influences on writing and publication. As a busy psychology consultant over many decades of practice, I sought to advance my skills from reading the literature, attending continuing education events, meeting with colleagues, and receiving supervision. I evolved a process of taking extensive notes, accumulating articles of interest, adding information to resource folders, and cataloging seminal reference documents. In the psychology internship program that I directed for many years, consultation theory and practice was a central professional development topic covered in seminars and supervision. As a primary instructor and supervisor, I outlined presentations devoted to consultation and prepared extensive notes that eventually transformed into text passages resembling short book chapters. The same result came from conference and workshop presentations on consultation I made frequently. When I learned that a reputable publisher was producing a series of specialty practice guidebooks, it occurred to me that my consultation archive might be the core for a publication proposal, which I submitted and was accepted. The final product, *Conducting Behavioral Consultation in Educational and Treatment Settings* was published in 2018. This book came about solely from my interest, training, and practice of consultation, having a gradually evolved collection of information sources, and taking advantage of a publication opportunity that was timely and resonated with my professional interests.

This guidebook addresses many publication outlets, mostly peer-reviewed journals, but other sources such as newsletters, periodicals, books, and electronic media. Journal articles take precedence for several reasons. First, many human services practitioners subscribe to journals, gain access to articles from institutional subscriptions, and obtain free downloads

available on the internet (e.g., ResearchGate, Google Scholar, PubMed). Time spent reading journal articles also qualifies as continuing education units (CEUs) for many licensing agencies, therefore, a large population of motivated readers is attracted to journals. In considering writing for publication, journals provide practitioners with specialty focus and many "types of submissions" ranging from experimental research, case reports, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, position papers, and letters-to-the-editor. Perhaps most appealing, there is autonomy in writing manuscripts: you decide on the type of article, content, target journals, and preparation timelines.

Within academic settings and with emphasis on scholarly production, promotion, and tenure, journal articles appear to be more highly regarded than book chapter publications and even books themselves (Onwuegbuzie, 2016). Book chapters, for example, typically are invited, accepted "up front," may bypass peer review, and do not contribute new knowledge that emerges from original research. Authored and edited books often reflect years of pedagogy and research expertise of senior faculty and their principal areas of inquiry. For these reasons, journal articles and related information sources like newsletters and trade periodicals likely should dominate your publication efforts. Keep in mind though that as your productivity increases, you may be invited to write articles for special-topic issues of journals and possibly book chapters. You may even get the urge to write and edit books (Chapter 12).

I arranged the chapters in the guidebook to be as fluid as possible. Early chapters build the case for writing for publication, discuss impediments (both actual and misperceived), and explore workable solutions. Next, individual chapters review some of the performance enhancing tactics that build writing skills, prerequisites for writing gainfully, and the strategy of writing in the context of practice. At the heart of the guidebook are chapters detailing the steps to executive a writing plan in preparation and implementation phases, followed by chapters on writing collaboratively, submitting manuscripts for publication, responding to editorial reviews, and completing pre/post publication activities. I conclude the guidebook with two chapters on the struggles maintaining writing discipline as a human services professional, managing a writing lifestyle, and recognizing the importance of self-care as you navigate an uneven playing field. Several of

the chapters include supplemental forms and graphics. Presented as tables and figures, they summarize key points, function as procedural checklists, and represent exemplars of simple tools I find helpful, and you may too.

Finally, in most of the chapters I included evidence support for my writing recommendations. The accumulation of advice by professional authors provides an empirical base for some suggestions and opinions about designing a strategic writing plan. There also is a research literature to inform procedures that have utility. Well accepted behavior-enhancing methods such as goal setting and positive reinforcement can be applied effectively in a writing context. Direct tactics like adhering to a writing schedule and tracking word count have been shown to improve productivity. You will find as well that not all writing practitioners and researchers agree on the steps towards performance enhancement. Indeed, there are some definitive contradictory positions on matters of writing execution and outcomes. Most readers of the guidebook will not be confused about where I stand on how to approach writing for publication.

Chapter Summary

I present a personal account of the influences on my desire to write for publication. Feedback from teachers and professors, reading the writing advice of successful authors, and absorbing the editorial critiques of my publication submissions were beneficial.

Some writers appear to be born with extraordinary talents while the rest of us need a good amount of tutelage and intensified instruction. All writers, however, improve their craft through dedicated reading, disciplined practice, and repetition.

Human services practitioners can and should write for publication, notwithstanding some realistic obstacles that have to be overcome and implementation of a strategic writing plan. This guidebook brings a wide lens to the pursuit of writing for publication, merging writing with a professional life, and feeling satisfied with the work performed, goals achieved, and outcomes produced.

CHAPTER 2

WHY WRITE FOR PUBLICATION?

As a human services professional, you no doubt have read numerous books, book chapters, journal articles, and newsletters. This literature informs your practice, keeps you up to date with the latest research findings, and is a source of continuing education. Indeed, it is unlikely that any of us could deliver services competently without reading this vital information within and outside of our specialty disciplines.

Unfortunately, although human services professionals read the available literature, very few write for publication despite many benefits of doing so. My discussions with colleagues and practitioners about why they do not write for publication has yielded comments such as, “I am not a college professor,” and “My employer doesn’t pay me to do research and publish articles.” Fair enough, and recognition of the contingencies that support writing and publishing in academic versus practice settings. College and university faculty, we know, generally sign job contracts with the stipulation that they will engage in a program of research and be responsible for scholarship through teaching, advisement, and publications. Not so in the human services sector comprised of schools, clinics, residential-care facilities, hospitals, center-based programs, and therapy offices. Establishing a publication record as a full-time academic is further incentivized with salary increases, bonuses, promotion, and tenure track advancement. Grant funding, so vital to faculty appointments, also depends on publication regularity. Outside of academia, these conditions are absent, therefore the motivation to write and publish must be found elsewhere.

Practice advancement. Persuading you to write for publication begins with the impact on professional behavior. Put simply, what better way to improve human services than having practitioners publish their research, case findings, treatment protocols, and practice recommendations? In this regard, psychologists, therapists, educators, psychiatrists, social workers,

behavior analysts, and nurses function as scientist-practitioners who facilitate research-to-practice translation in many fields. With multiple publication outlets, practitioners can write about many topics that attract attention from a wide population of helping professions, thereby enhancing the external validity of dissemination science.

Here are just a few examples, discussed in later chapters, of publications generated from practice.

- Write case reports gleaned from identity-protected and sanitized client notes.
- Many settings request consumers to complete satisfaction surveys. These data can be organized and reported as descriptive appraisals of service models.
- Take ideas from service-team meetings to write practice-sensitive position papers such as novel methods to enhance appointment-keeping or to increase cultural/diversity awareness among care providers.
- Some applied projects are not intended as formal research but conducted with enough rigor to qualify as a methodologically sound study.

Learning. William Zinsser (2016) offered cogent motivational advice that if you want to learn about a subject, make a commitment to write about it. Any publication objective demands that you read deeply the literature pertinent to your topic. The knowledge you acquire may come from comparing and contrasting dominant themes within particular disciplines, summarizing the evidence support that bears on the work you are preparing, and locating references previously unexplored. Learning-by-writing generates new ideas for projects and stimulates inquiry into novel areas. I note that a foundation of my professional development was quantitative research methods, specifically single-case experimental design (Barlow et al., 2008; Kazdin, 2020) and the application of this methodology to clinical practice. As my publication productivity increased, I learned more about the potential utility of group-comparison (nomothetic) designs and the potent confluence of quantitative and qualitative mixed-methods analysis (Onwuegbuzie, et al., 2011). I probably never would have broadened my

understanding of these areas if I had not decided to make writing a priority of my professional life.

Professional exposure. With publications come visibility, acknowledgement of your expertise, and practice opportunities that otherwise would not have occurred. In illustration, I have received and continue to get referrals that begin as follows: "*Hello, Dr. Luiselli, our center treats children with severe self-injurious behavior, we read your journal articles on this topic, and have some cases you could help us with*." Or, a telephone call or email begins with: "*You were referred to us by a psychologist who read your publications on staff training. Would you be interested in consulting to our agency*?" On other occasions, I receive requests for paid speaking engagements on topics that were addressed in my publications. Consider, then, that writing for publication can generate income as a private practitioner, not from being paid to write, but from the impact your published work has on attracting business and from building an exemplary reputation.

Creativity. Another answer to the question, why write for publication, is that the activity is wonderfully creative. Prolific author Issac Asimov (1995) said that thinking was the activity he liked best and analogized writing as thinking through his fingers. In her book, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, Anne Lamott (1995) made the point, "Writing does for you what having a baby does: It makes you pay attention, it softens you, it wakes you up" (p. 22). And how about this pearl from a fortune cookie: "Good writing is clear thinking made visible." So, undertake the task of writing for publication as nurturing your creative juices, allowing you to express yourself in carefully crafted prose toward an identified readership who can learn from what you have to say.

Creativity can be realized in many ways, such as taking on subjects underrepresented in the literature, submitting articles to journals outside your practice discipline, writing about emerging trends you think are worthy of contemplation, and always to acquire a recognizable compositional style. Perhaps the ultimate demonstration of creativity is holding in your hands a journal article or chapter in a book you wrote that began as a blank sheet of paper or empty computer screen!

Communication. Some evidence reveals that effective public speaking can improve writing abilities (Yun et al., 2012) and I suspect the converse is true. The more you write, the more attention you pay to words, syntax,

sentence construction, and expressive clarity, all of which contribute to the quality of verbal language. My guess is that you read the words you write aloud (or covertly), being sensitive to how they sound and will be understood by readers, thus having awareness of how writing and speaking are interrelated. Indeed, writing out passages contained in a speech and practicing oral delivery is a recommended strategy for alleviating public speaking anxiety (Humm, 2024). Therefore, writing for publication can have a salutary effect on verbal exposition or more precisely, writing with regularity makes you a better speaker.

Understanding your motivation to write for publication is a helpful exercise before designing a strategic plan. A preliminary self-assessment gives you a perspective on your writing objectives and the motivational influences to achieve them. While recognizing the writing for publication benefits raised earlier in the chapter, another source of motivation could be as simple as, "I've never published an article before and would like to see my name in print." Or, the driving goal might be finding collaboration among colleagues similarly attracted to conducting and writing about service-oriented projects. Your personal motivation to write for publication should be high if you work at a human services setting that encourages and supports practice and research dissemination. Learning new and refining your current practice skills may further top your list after self-reflection.

More elaboration on self-management also converges with finding purpose and motivation to write for publication. The basis of self-management is applying behavior-change strategies intended to produce desirable outcomes (Cooper et al., 2019). Both antecedent (before behavior) and consequence (after behavior) strategies contribute to a self-managed repertoire (Chapter 7). Writing in the most comfortable physical surroundings, for example, is an easily manipulated antecedent condition. Taking brief breaks from productive writing represents a reinforcing consequence intervention. Upcoming chapters give many examples and recommendations for combining performance enhancing antecedents and consequences in a strategic writing plan.

Monitoring performance also is integral to self-management, usually focused on components of behavior and permanent product goals. The duration of time spent writing is one valid and easily recorded monitoring metric. Number of words and pages written represents a permanent product

measure you also can monitor with relative ease. Self-monitoring tracks writing productivity and, by itself, often is reinforcing when it captures desirable behavior.

Chapter Summary

There is no test that will convince you about the merits of writing for publication or energize your writing efforts. However, as outlined in this chapter, incentives exist within our worlds as practitioners and should be appreciated when designing a performance plan.

Take time to contemplate what writing for publication can accomplish for you personally and within the services arena. Practice advancement, learning, professional exposure, creativity, and communication proficiency are just some of the positive results writing brings. Adherence to performance enhancing tactics makes plan implementation possible and further motivates the behavior that gains writing success.

CHAPTER 3

OBSTACLES TO WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

Obstacles to writing for publication include realistic challenges present in most human services settings. With multiple job responsibilities, many practitioners do not view writing for publication as a viable activity they can undertake successfully. Supportive resources are necessary to achieve publication objectives and facilitate the behavior that produces articles, books, and book chapters. These and other roadblocks can be overcome and some impediments are perceived incorrectly. This chapter reviews descriptive studies concerned with writing and publishing by practitioners and suggests solutions to some of the more easily resolved obstacles.

Before discussing the challenges present at human services settings, I propose that one impactful obstacle to writing for publication is that most of us were never taught writing mechanics and discipline outside some general rules governing spelling and grammar. The instruction that was provided typically did not cover *how* to write effectively, arrange writing tasks, allocate time efficiently, manage productivity, and perform most of the activities prioritized in this guidebook.

We also were rarely exposed to individuals who modelled exemplary writing behavior or functioned as mentors during undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate years. Professors who lacked writing expertise passed on poor habits to students, be it engaging in “binge” writing, missing deadlines, or attributing good writing as a “genetic gift” instead of behavior within our control. Fortunately, this obstacle that makes writing hard work can be overcome—you do not have to return to school or seek remedial education.

Kelley et al. (2015) surveyed “prolific practitioner authors” in the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA) to gather recommendations that would help individuals establish research productivity and publish articles outside of academia. From an in-depth review of three prominent ABA journals spanning a 15-year period, seven non-academically affiliated authors were

identified based on the number of articles they had published. Six of the authors subsequently were interviewed from a list of 20 questions that inquired about factors integral to conducting applied research and writing for publication.

Responses in Kelley et al. (2015) endorsed by a minimum of three of the six interviewees were that improving service delivery was a motivation for research (50%), practice issues generate research ideas (50%), and research meetings with peers-supervisors are held in person (100%). The interviewees reported that they wrote "whenever there is time" (50%) and weekly (50%), although finding the time to write was the greatest barrier (66.6%). They also set project goals each year (50%) and were responsible for submitting (83.3%) and revising (33.3%) manuscripts for publication. Other insightful findings were that the interviewees did not think "the organization you work for encourages you to conduct research" (50%) and they did not receive extra compensation for the work produced (66.6%).

Kelley et al. (2015) necessarily was a small descriptive study because a search of the literature confirmed that very few practitioners write journal articles! The focus of the study was on circumstances associated with conducting research culminating in publications but by inference, the same constraints of time, support, and compensation apply to writing non-empirical reports, review articles, and position papers. The top recommendations for increasing productivity were dedicating the time to plan, implement, and write the results of research, closely supervising projects from the initial stage through publication submission, and writing collaboratively. These strategies are integral to the writing plan preparation and implementation phases covered in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 respectively.

In a related study, Valentino and Juanico (2020) addressed barriers practitioners faced in conducting research through a survey of board-certified behavior analysts (n = 824) at settings primarily serving individuals with autism. Survey respondents replied that their settings provided opportunities for research mentoring and supervision (71%), pursuing research projects (54.2%), writing (23.2%), and publishing (42.7%). However, 86.1% of respondents indicated that they did not have adequate time for research outside of clinical practice. Other related survey findings were that many of the respondents had not participated in research (68.1%)

even though they were interested in doing so, as well as presenting at conferences (69.6%) and publishing articles (71.8%).

The three highest ranked obstacles to conducting research found in Valentino and Juanico (2020) were lack of time (47.5%), mentorship (12.5%), and opportunity (11.9%). When queried if they would engage in research absent the barriers, 83.8% of respondents affirmed, and 90.0% endorsed research as being somewhat important/important/very important to them. The results of this study exemplify further that integrating practice and research, allocating time to write for publication, and having dissemination direction within services settings are necessary supports for practitioners.

Referring to Kelley et al. (2015) again, an added recommendation was to design a comparison study with academic authors to evaluate the influences on research and publication activity unique to that population. Apropos to this matter, Wahid et al. (2021) reviewed a large literature on factors associated with the number of publications and productivity of researchers, institutions, and countries. The review yielded a total of 48 studies and three categories labelled as personal, environmental, and situational. Time, academic qualification, motivation, age, management of research projects, and non-academic work experience were some of the influential personal factors. Environmental factors included access to books and journals, library support, and availability of electronic information resources. Funding, collaboration, training, and a reduced teaching regimen qualified as key situational factors. These findings are instructive and some of them similar to the research and publication barriers voiced by practitioners in Kelley et al. (2015) and Valentino and Juanico (2020), specifically time, resources, and support.

I have encountered practitioners who expressed other obstacles to writing for publication. Some individuals say that they forgo writing because of unfamiliarity with the process of preparing a manuscript for submission to a journal, periodical, or newsletter. This inexperience extends to lack of knowledge about the types of articles suitable for publication. Such opinions are curious when considering that many reluctant writers read the professional literature and in conversation, often present ideas and projects that are print worthy. On the positive side, these obstacles are the easiest to solve.

Overcoming obstacles before implementing a strategic writing plan

The sections below present approaches to overcome some of the writing obstacles practitioners report most frequently. These approaches establish a foundation before implementing a strategic writing plan.

Cognitive Attribution. Consider the amount of writing you do as a human services professional. There are case notes, session transcripts, progress reports, evaluations, treatment summaries, and more. Email correspondence is integral to practice, you sometimes write letters of reference for colleagues, and responding to referral sources and third-party inquiries is not uncommon. The point is that *we must and do write all the time*.

A useful tactic is to view writing for publication as a variant of behavior you perform routinely. You possess the skill of composing words, sentences, and paragraphs, meeting deadlines, and having other people read (and often critique) what you wrote. Writing for publication is applying this behavioral repertoire in another context, guided by different formalities for sure, but writing all the same. “Thinking” about writing this way offers a cognitive and, I suggest, performance enhancing perspective. See, too, the writing lifestyle considerations contained in Chapter 14.

Support. It helps to have administrative support for publication writing and dissemination. Speak to leaders about the many advantages publication brings to organizations and human services settings. Schools, clinics, residential care facilities, and rehabilitation programs that publish approaches to and outcomes from quality client care build a positive reputation and perceptions of expertise. As a by-product of reputation, there may be increased interest from potential employees and a boost to recruitment efforts. Similarly, a positive reputation appeals to colleges and universities that routinely search for practicum placement sites for students enrolled in human services studies. As a purely business perspective, visibility and recognition of practice settings from publications may widen the referral base among children, adults, and families. Project initiatives and research with publication objectives also contribute to staff training and professional development.

It may take several encounters with administrators to build your base but well worth the effort to garner support at the highest levels, per the recommendations below.

1: Most of us have service contracts that stipulate our responsibilities and work performance standards. Make the request to add writing for publication as a contract designation, describing key activities and approximate time allotment, as illustrated here:

- "Dr. Smith will complete at least one publication per calendar year in a peer-reviewed journal, edited book, newsletter, practice periodical, or other approved outlet."
- "The publications Dr. Smith produces may be solo authored or written collaboratively with one of more colleagues."
- "Dr. Smith is approved for up to 4 hours per month (40-hour work week) to writing and other publication associated activities."

Also, request that your contract be reviewed annually against the agreed productivity benchmarks and time allocation. The contractual arrangements may not require adjustment or changes may have to be considered if the approved standards were not achieved. Conversely, you may want to amend the contract if the standards were surpassed (e.g., more publications during the year).

2: Recruit persons at your service center to join reading and writing groups (DiGennaro Reed et al., 2021; Parsons & Reid, 2011). The purpose of a reading group is to identify publication topics represented in the literature and survey respective journal articles, book chapters, and practice documents. For example, group members who are therapists may be interested in writing one or more case reports of individuals who were treated successfully for body-focused repetitive behavior (BFRB) at a community clinic. Literature reviews conducted by group members would focus on contemporary evidence-based therapies for this disorder, clinical management, and intervention priorities such as long-term maintenance of effective outcomes and client satisfaction with treatment.

Reading group members compile the results of their reviews and share impressions during meetings. These discussions are a didactic learning experience to become familiar with speaking among colleagues and

summarizing materials to be included in a potential writing project. Taking stock of the literature further guides decisions about the most promising publication outlets.

3: Writing groups are assembled to capitalize on the advantages of collaborative projects (Chapter 8) and implementing a strategic writing plan (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). Support comes from group members sharing responsibilities. Some members may take the lead writing sections of a manuscript under the direction of the primary author. With a research-based writing project, other members might aggregate and analyze data that must be written up. Another writing task is assembling and denoting high-priority reference citations. Writing groups are especially good for members early to the process of writing for publication and sharing roles, although there are challenges as well, explored in a later chapter.

4: In a journal article and book chapter, I and my colleagues described how human services organizations can form research teams that promote publication of studies and other empirical demonstrations of applied significance (Luiselli et al., 2022, 2023). Teams are composed of practitioners who are interested in similar topics of service delivery which lend themselves to research inquiry. Areas of interest might be evaluating procedures for administering a program of trauma informed care, improving clinic scheduling, assessing the effectiveness of care provider training at a residential facility, and conducting satisfaction surveys with service-recipients. The steps below should be considered when forming teams.

(a) Designate a team chairperson with research expertise who can direct members towards "doable" projects informed by the relevant literature. Most often, the chairperson role is taken by a senior level professional at the service setting with advanced degrees and experience disseminating research.

(b) The team chairperson must have research time approved so that she/he can coordinate and supervise the many activities necessary for designing, implementing, evaluating, and reporting projects. The time should be accounted for in a typical work week and articulated-approved contractually.

(c) Schedule research team meetings routinely, not "whenever possible" or "as needed." I recommend a fixed schedule such as the *fourth Wednesday each month from 10:00 to 11:30am*. Team success also hinges on deciding a schedule that is determined by the availability of members and finding days and times that maximize attendance. Missed or fluctuating research team meetings make publication nearly impossible, therefore the chairperson should be vigilant and correct schedule irregularities when encountered.

(d) Research team meetings serve multiple functions but primarily, address proposed projects, monitor approved projects, and write the results of projects appropriate for presentation and publication submission. Meetings operate best when discussion points and action plans are faithfully recorded and distributed to team members in a summary document. Figure 3.1 is an example of one form I use to track the performance of research teams. At meetings, we review and update all approved research projects assigned a supervisor and respective discussion points and action plans. If a new research proposal is on the meeting agenda, the team reviews it and renders one of four decisions by consensus. Projects that have been selected for conference-workshop presentation and publication are the third agenda item.

(e) The team chairperson has the critical responsibility of making sure that successful research projects ultimately are submitted for publication. Thus, assigning and following through with writing tasks requires the same coordination and oversight as was needed to conduct and finish the research. As a preview of Chapter 9, the chairperson must acknowledge and work with a corresponding author to approve a first-draft manuscript, edit content, confirm that the final manuscript reports original (not plagiarized) material, select the most appropriate publication outlet, and follow through with submission.

Opportunity. Merging practice with research can produce publications, or as Valentino and Juanico (2020) reflected, "Many of the problems that practitioners face in their daily clinical activities would make excellent research questions" (p. 899). So much of the time, research is mystified as only being possible under contrived and artificial conditions with uncompromising controls and rigid procedural protocols. However, good clinical practice that follows a discipline's competency standards makes