addition, utilizing a collaborative authoring platform, such as SharePoint, enables multiple writers to work on a document concurrently. As documents are further developed, tools such as table, listing, and figure tools are available to help format and present data clearly to reviewers. Lastly, as a large amount of data are presented in regulatory documents, it is essential to have a quality control tool in place to ensure a document is ready for submission.

Documents

In the rotational training program at Merck, Drs Carr, Mageau, and Xu were able to gain hands-on experience and participate in shadowing opportunities to develop an understanding of the types of documents that medical writers author. During that time, they learned how documents were built during the authoring process, shadowed the Quality Control group, attended consensus meetings, and eventually transitioned to being lead authors.

Soft Skills

Lastly, further developing self-management and people skills helps to strengthen a medical writer's ability to work collaboratively even while remote, build connections, and maintain high productivity. Medical writers are responsible for leading meetings and managing a team to build a cohesive document. Having strong people skills is critical to achieving this goal.

When transitioning into a regulatory medical writing role, there are several transferrable skills that can be utilized from previous experiences, including soft skills, technical skills, and core knowledge. To further prepare new writers, numerous training opportunities are offered through organizations such as NIH, local regulatory affairs forums, and more. Lastly, AMWA provides a recommended training outline focusing on core knowledge and skills, documents, and soft skills that further helps to bridge any knowledge gaps for new writers entering the everchanging field.

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GROWING YOUR CAREER AS AN EDITOR

Speakers

Crystal Herron, PhD, ELS, *Redwood Ink, San Francisco Bay Area, CA*

Loretta Bohn, ELS, *RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC*

Erica Goodoff, ELS(D), *The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX*

By Angela Trenkle, BS

Being a strong editor is a skill set that can open many doors in the medical writing field. In this panel session, three editors discussed some of their tips and tricks for navigating the world of editors.

How Editing and Writing Differ

Ms Goodoff began by explaining that writing is almost like a brain dump; you are just writing everything that is in your mind with regard to the topic. Editing requires more of a critical thinking piece: I have content, but how do I shape it? Dr Herron added that emotional intelligence is also an important skill to have for editing so that you can eloquently explain your proposed changes to authors. Ms Bohn also emphasized that editing is not personal and that editors are looking at the writing from a different perspective—advocating for readers. All three of these editors mentioned that it was important to explain why you're recommending the changes and to back up your suggestions with data and resources.

Key Skills for Editing Grant Proposals

Ms Goodoff began by stating that a key skill for editing grant proposals is to find ways to make it as effortless as possible to read the text and to make sure that the logic flows and ties back to the main objective. Dr Herron emphasized that the storytelling element of the research project is important, which includes how the research project is expected to end. Ms Bohn pointed out the navigation pane in Word, which is a good way to look at pieces of a grant for consistency. All three mentioned the importance of cutting down the length and wording and ensuring that the entire document is consistent in flow.

Teaching/Mentoring Editors

Ms Goodoff began by discussing how coaching new colleagues in editing differs from editing when the client is the only one who will see your edits. It can be helpful to teach new editors because it helps you to become a better editor, but you must find that balance between fixing the problems and teaching the new editor to do it themselves. With

colleagues, it can be complicated because you're editing someone else's editing, so it's important to check your ego at the door. Dr Herron suggested specifically that freelancers try to find another editor that they can trust and learn from because, most of the time, freelancers are working alone. Ms Bohn also added to this by emphasizing the importance of having a more organized approach when meeting with someone and suggested cross-teaching so you can learn from each other.

Working Remotely

Ms Bohn began by mentioning that the skills are the same, but mentoring someone that you aren't in the same room with requires a unique approach. Ms Goodoff chimed in and agreed that the core editing skills are the same, but the presentation of the information is different when working remotely. She had to learn a lot of new technology and noted that you don't get the same chance to rely on audience reactions, but you can write a tentative script while presenting on Zoom. Dr Herron added the suggestion that you can post a sticky note with a person drawn on it near your camera; that way you have "someone" to talk to and look at near the camera, which will help your audience connect with you. Ms Bohn closed by suggesting a fake commute at home, something that signifies the beginning and the end of your workday.

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REMOTE BUT NOT ALONE: NAVIGATING DIFFICULT PERSONALITIES WHEN YOU WORK FROM HOME

Speaker

Melissa Christianson, PhD, *Whitsell Innovations, Inc., Chapel Hill, NC*

By Stacie Marsh, MPA, CPH, GPC

Collaborative medical writing requires leadership from professional medical writers to guide teams of people toward the common goal of completing documents with clarity, precision, and adherence to third party guidelines, often within challenging timeframes. Medical writing teams typically include groups of individuals from widely varying backgrounds, areas of expertise, priorities, pressures, and communication styles. Medical writers must foster effective teamwork in order to successfully lead their teams toward achieving their common goal.

The pandemic has forced more writing teams to collaborate in a virtual environment, requiring medical writers to recognize and navigate team dynamics and interpersonal intricacies in creative ways. Dr Christianson's presentation at the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA)'s 2021 Medical Writing and Communication conference identified the most common personality types among difficult members of medical writing teams and provided specific strategies for navigating these traits in a virtual environment.

Defining and Recognizing Difficult Behaviors

The first step in dealing with difficult behaviors is recognizing that they exist. Although perceptions of difficult behaviors vary by the individual assessing the behavior, difficult behaviors and attitudes typically refer to those that are misaligned with the expectations of the writer and the team.

Dr Christianson illustrated the most common types of difficult behaviors in a behavior categories axis (Figure). Group 1 includes those who are narrowly focused with tendencies to approach a project in a way that mismanages the writers time, attention, and processes, and ultimately impedes the writer's ability to move a project forward in an optimal timeframe. Examples of Group 1 traits include micromanagers, digressers, know-it-alls, worriers, and wordsmithers. Those in Group 1 may be concerned about proving their own worth or getting blamed for less-than-optimal outcomes for reasons such as job vulnerability or being new in a position with perhaps lesser credentials that other team members.

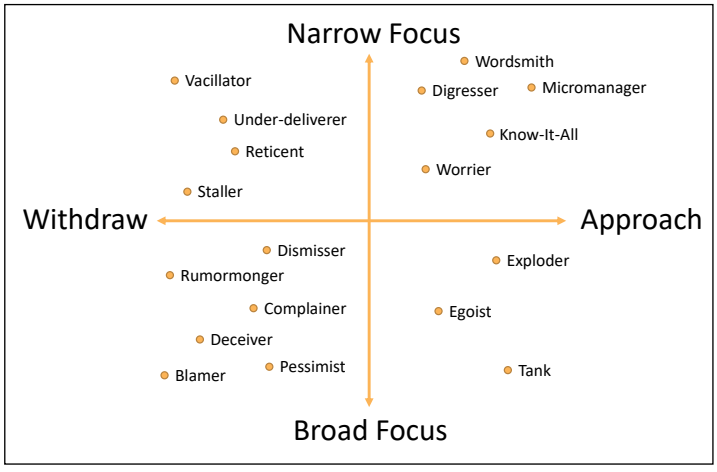

Figure. Top left (Group 3); top right (Group 1); bottom left (Group 4); bottom right (Group 2).

Group 2 includes those who are more broadly focused but aggressively approach projects. These behaviors conjure