

## “Begin with the End in Mind”

(Stephen R. Covey)

Helene Bowen Brady, DNP, M.Ed, RN, NPD-BC, NEA-BC <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1252-1551> & Kathleen Ahern Gould, PhD, RN <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2874-0794>

### Background

- Authorship is complex and one of the many conundrums that complicates the writing process.
- Professionals beginning any project and considering publication, should discuss authorship early to begin a smooth transition from project to publication.
- Authorship should be a topic of discussion at the start of any project so be sure to “Begin with the end in mind” (Covey, 1989, 2004)

### Before You Write: Consider Criteria for Authorship

- The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE, 2023) define four criteria for authorship:
  1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
  2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
  3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
  4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.
- The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, 2023) provides information about ethical practices for publication.

### Step 1: Develop a Charter or Proposal for New Initiatives

- Project charters are structured documents that guide key project/study steps.
- Two important components are identifying team members and the project sponsor.
  - Although team members may change over time, chances are they will part of the future writing team.
  - The sponsor ensures project aligns with strategic goals and will provide leadership support if a journal requests a letter of permission to publish work.

**The Key Takeaway:** Take the time at the beginning of a project to do this work and you will be well on the way to the first draft of a manuscript when the project is finished.

### Step 2: Identify Potential Authors or Contributors

- Critical considerations for this step:
  - Who made significant contributions to the project and meets criteria for authorship?
  - Who will be first author?
  - What will be the order of authors?
- Remember to acknowledge people who do not qualify as authors but contribute or support the work.

**The Key Takeaway:** Become familiar with, and adhere to, the ICMJE and COPE guidelines.

### Step 3: Clarify Roles & Contributions

- Develop a detailed written document that is shared with the writing team:
  - List individuals with credentials and Open Researcher and Contributor iD (ORCID, n.d.).
  - Clarify authorship roles: First/lead author, co-authors, senior author, and corresponding author.
  - Author or contributor?
    - CRediT helps authors identify levels of contribution using a series of 14 predefined roles, such as conceptualization, design and implementation, technology support, data curation, writing/editing/review.

**The Key Takeaway:** Develop a written document that clearly defines roles, order of authorship, and individual contributions.

### Step 4: Secure Author Agreement

- Secure a firm written commitment from each individual author.
  - One strategy is to send a formal email invitation to potential authors listing order of authorship and individual responsibilities.
- Require email confirmation and agreement about their individual contributions.

**The Key Takeaway:** Secure a formal, written commitment from authors.

### Helpful Resources

- [Authorship: “Begin With the End in Mind” : Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing \(lww.com\)](https://www.lww.com)
- COPE: <https://publicationethics.org/>
- CRediT: <https://casrai.org/credit/>
- ICMJE: <https://www.icmje.org/>
- Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID): <https://orcid.org/> [/what-is-orcid](https://orcid.org/what-is-orcid)
- Wiley Author Services: Best Practice Guidelines on Research Integrity and Publishing Ethics: <https://authorservices.wiley.com/ethics-guidelines/index.html#5/index.html#5>
- Wolters Kluwer: Lippincott author talk!
  - A free quarterly publication for authors <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/solutions/lippincott-journals/author-resources>
- Wolters Kluwer: Lippincott Journals: Author Resources - Provides numerous resources and tools for authors: <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/solutions/lippincott-journals/author-resources>
- World Association of Medical Editors (WAME): [AME - A global association of editors of peer-reviewed medical journals](https://www.wame.org/)

### Summary

- Publishing is an important professional accomplishment and tangible evidence of the investment of the writing team.
- Before writing, take the time to ensure that decisions about authorship are ethical, fair, and truthful.

Contact Information & References

Hbowen-brady@bwh.harvard.edu