Several years of Research Reflections have provided instruction and supportive guidance to assist both novice and advanced scholars in conducting and appraising nursing research. From developing a strong research question to critically evaluating the quality of a published study, the ultimate purpose of nursing research is to disseminate findings in order to have an impact on clinical practice. This objective is contained within the notion of knowledge translation (KT). The Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR, 2016) defines KT as “a dynamic and iterative process” consisting of several steps that foster the creation, and subsequent dissemination, of knowledge for the purpose of improving the health of Canadians by strengthening healthcare services. A short list of additional terms imbued with similar purpose and meaning to KT include knowledge exchange, implementation, research utilization, diffusion, and knowledge transfer. Graham and colleagues (2006) suggested that confusion arising from multiple methodologies and theories for disseminating research findings be clarified to ensure that they are not “lost in knowledge translation” (p.13). Indeed, for both novice and experienced researchers an awkward and frustrating disconnect can exist between generated research knowledge and crucial stakeholders it was meant to inform. Unless research results are communicated with others in a way that is effective and meaningful, potentially important and practice-changing knowledge could slip into the obscurity of a file cabinet or rarely-cited manuscript.

Communication is the key to disseminating research results. Communication is commonly defined as a verbal and nonverbal means of exchanging information, but it also embodies the notion of making connections and building relationships. Therefore, learning how to effectively communicate with a variety of audiences about research is an important skill. The most familiar ways in which nurse researchers communicate research results is by publishing in the academic literature and doing conference presentations (both oral sessions and posters). These strategies do allow the sharing of research findings with specific audiences, and probably target higher level stakeholders but, ultimately, may not generate long-lasting results or improvements in clinical practice. In developing a comprehensive communication plan, researchers are being encouraged to not only be creative in how they communicate findings, but to draw on an evolving body of theory as to how knowledge actually gets taken up in practice.

Effective communication consists of both obtaining an intended outcome, as well as evoking a vivid impression. Ponterotto and Grieger (2007) suggested that improved communication of research results is associated with strong research skills, as well as the use of “thick description” in targeted writing. Indeed, acting like a marketing executive, in order to effectively communicate about research findings, the researcher needs to carefully construct a communications plan that incorporates creative means to target a variety of audiences. Variety is not only the spice of life, it also increases the opportunity for knowledge uptake and dissemination, thereby simultaneously raising the likelihood that research findings will find a way into clinical application.

Some inspired and impactful ways that researchers can communicate their research include:

- performative (or interpretive) dance
- curating exhibits at local museums or art galleries
- authoring colloquial books, magazine articles, and newsletter pieces
- hosting open-forum philosopher’s cafés (for example, the CIHR “café scientifique”)
- writing theatre-based performance pieces
- facilitating focus groups and round table discussions
- doing on-site in-services for nursing staff
- developing blogs and project-specific websites
- utilizing social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook
- posting mural or graphic poster projects in public spaces or business lobbies
- creating an “explainer video” to post on YouTube or organizational websites
- producing a colourful brochure or flyer highlighting key points and findings
- partnering with other researchers working on similar research questions
- regular, strategic networking with clinicians and other stakeholders.

This is just a sampling of strategies researchers can utilize to capture the attention of target audiences and disseminate findings in a way that is both resourceful and consequential. Each idea can build and strengthen relationships between the researcher, the

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research findings, and a greater community that may be interested in this knowledge.

While there is no ‘right’ method to communicate knowledge gleaned from research, it is possible to elevate knowledge translation strategies to maximize impact. Ask yourself, ‘what is the ultimate goal for this research?’ Is it to impact clinical practice, describe a phenomenon, or improve health outcomes? Carefully consider who the best audiences might be to understand and respond to the research findings. Is it front-line clinicians? Students? Advanced practice nurses? By naming the group (or groups) that might benefit from the findings and then marrying their community priorities and values with the overarching goals for research dissemination, the researcher can generate innovative and authentic ideas to sharpen and amplify communication strategies.

REFERENCES

