**Why create and present a poster**?

- Method of quickly and easily presenting your project and results to a larger number of colleagues
- Helps to collect and organize your information and ask for immediate feedback prior to finalizing your manuscript
- Leads to opportunities for networking and collaboration

**Steps to create an effective poster presentation**:

1. Organize data & determine your interest in presenting at a particular meeting
2. Write abstract, including all required sections for submission (usually title, authors, disclosure statement, introduction and objectives, methods, results, discussion and conclusions)
3. Determine size and overall layout of poster
   a. Typically prepared as a *PowerPoint* (or similar slide design program) slide; set dimensions for slide prior to beginning any design in order to avoid a "stretched" appearance or the need to resize all font, tables and charts at the end
      i. In PowerPoint, use the "File" dropdown menu, choose "page setup" and adjust the height and width of the document
   b. Your institution may have preferred or required poster templates available; these templates may save you a considerable amount of time formatting and designing the layout of your poster and often will contain your institution logo for a more polished appearance
   c. Generally, posters are approximately 3'x6' (boards provided at the Southwestern States Residency Conference are 4' x 8') and contain most of the same section headings as your abstract; your content may be divided into two or three columns to be easily read and visually appealing (see sample layouts below)
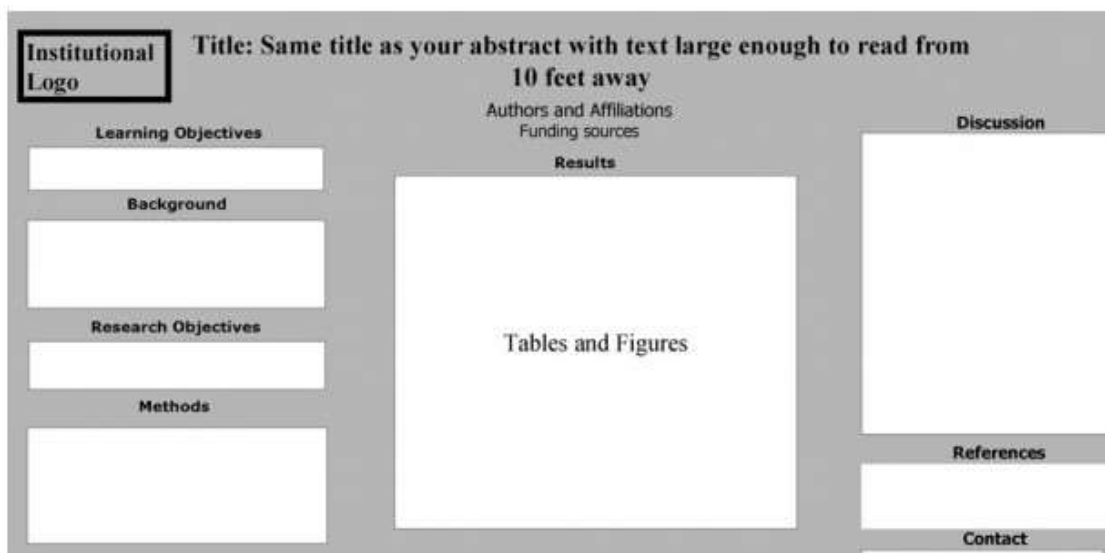


*Figure 1*. Sample research poster layout. Wood GJ and Morrison RS: Writing Abstracts and Developing Posters for National Meetings. J Palliat Med 2011;14(3):353-359.

*Figure 2* Sample research poster layout, taken from ASHP Poster Presenter Handbook, created for ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting 2015.

4.  Begin populating the sections of your laid-out poster (most of this info can be taken from your abstract)
    a.  Title: Should adequately describe the content of your project. Do not begin your title with "A", "An", or "The"; only the first word and any proper nouns in your title should be capitalized
    b.  Introduction/Purpose/Background: What your project adds to the body of available research
    c.  Objectives/Methods: Brief and specific description of methods, may include flow-charts to improve readability
    d.  Results: Include statistical analysis; utilize graphs, charts, tables to visually organize information and illustrate results
    e.  Evaluation/Discussion/Conclusion: Discuss key findings, study limitations, opportunities for future research and how your results will impact practice
    f.  Disclosure Statement: Place in the lower right corner of your poster. Disclose any potential conflicts for each author (including "Nothing to Disclose").
5.  Focus on the overall visual appeal and design of your poster: a reader should be able to understand your project and results based solely on the content of the poster without verbal input from you
    a.  Font size for title should be large enough to read from 5-7 feet away (30-36 point font)
    b.  Font sizes for the rest of your content should be large enough to read from 3-5 feet away (nothing smaller than 24 point font)
    c.  Leave blank space between sections and try to limit the overall amount of text on the poster; inclusion of graphs and charts/tables will help to improve overall visual appeal
    d.  Bullet points allow for fewer words and less text-heavy posters while ensuring your most important points are highlighted
    e.  Choose a single font (sans-serif fonts improve readability) and keep it constant throughout poster; do not use more than 2 or 3 typeface colors
    f.  Use muted or neutral colors for background to avoid harsh color contrasts that may be difficult to read
    g.  Have at least two other people proofread your poster; there's nothing worse than realizing on presentation day that you've made a spelling or grammatical error

**Poster Tip Sheet**

6. According to the "rule of tens", most people view your poster for ten seconds at a distance of ten feet. Once they approach your poster, you should be able to introduce your project in ten seconds and the overall content should be able to be absorbed in ten minutes.
   a. Create a short 1-2 minute summary of your poster, highlighting what the project adds to the body of available research and your overall findings as well as possible next steps for future research
   b. You may want to consider bringing business cards to give to interested people in case they would like to follow up about your project, or a small number of color copies of your poster (on 8.5"x11" paper) with your contact information
7. Finishing touches and finalizing your poster
   a. Ensure you have allowed enough time for printing and delivery of your poster
   b. A carrying case may be useful to ensure your poster does not get damaged in transport

## FINAL CHECKLIST

**Content:**

- ☐ Title, authors and institution affiliations are listed
- ☐ Information is presented with a logical flow (left to right; top to bottom)
- ☐ Graphs, tables, or charts are used to display or convey important information, whenever possible; graphics are not stretched/distorted, avoid low-quality images
- ☐ Sections are clear and concise, easily distinguishable from each other
- ☐ Overall content can be absorbed in 10 minutes or less

**Appearance**:

- ☐ Poster meets size requirements/restrictions
- ☐ Poster does not appear cluttered
- ☐ Major headings are in large enough font to be read from 3-5 feet away
- ☐ Text, graphs and figures can be read from 2-3 feet away
- ☐ Font is similar throughout poster (simple sans-serif fonts are easier to read)
- ☐ Colors are used to emphasize important points, but color schemes are visually pleasing and not overly distracting to the reader
- ☐ Poster has been proofread by at least two other people, preferably at least one unfamiliar with your project

**Presentation Day**:

- ☐ Plan to carry your poster in a shipping tube or case to prevent damage
- ☐ Bring push pins to secure poster to board; tape, Velcro and staples are not allowed
- ☐ Check poster board assignments and allow 15 minutes to set up your poster prior to your assigned start time