Engage with Colleagues & Enhance your Practice by Starting a Journal Club

by Gayle Graham on June 8th, 2017 in Research, Interpersonal Communication, Teaching & Learning

| Comments

Sharing knowledge, enhancing critical appraisal skills and delivering better patient care are common goals of hospital personnel. Starting a journal club can help your department achieve these goals. Journal clubs are a well-established method of professional development and can be tailored to suit the unique needs of your group. We’ve adapted tips from the literature and the web to help you out.

Tips to Get Started

Identify Membership

Members may or may not share the same profession but have a common interest in the articles’ content. Members from a variety of disciplines may generate more lively
discussions. Keeping the group to six or fewer members ensures that everyone gets a chance to speak, while still allowing for a healthy discussion if anyone is absent.

**Establish Goals of the Club**

Goals should be relevant to your profession/group, and should be reviewed regularly by members.

**Recruit Meeting Leader & Supervisor**

Meeting leadership can be rotated monthly. The meeting leader selects an article for discussion and drafts 2-3 questions to get the conversation started. The role of supervisor is changed less frequently – we recommend every six months to one year. The supervisor handles administrative work, such as recruiting and announcing meeting leaders, distributing articles and taking attendance.

**Schedule Meeting Times & Location**

Choose a regular time that works for everyone. Monthly meetings have the best results. Greater meeting frequency may result in lower attendance. Meetings may be held in person or remotely if your members are spread out geographically. Book space ahead of time if needed and work out any technology kinks beforehand.

**Distribute Article**

A week to ten days’ notice is recommended to allow enough time for participants to obtain a copy of the article and read it in advance.

**Meet & Facilitate Discussion**

Members’ critical appraisal of articles fosters productive discussion. Consider using structured worksheets if it suits the content and your group. Conclude the discussion by putting it in the context of your profession.

**Evaluate the Club’s Effectiveness**

Evaluation may take place formally or informally. Surveying your membership annually about what is and isn’t working can improve the club and help members stay engaged.
Share your findings and improvements with colleagues so they can benefit from your learning.

**Let Us Help You Find & Share Articles**

Not sure where to start looking for a recent article for your journal club? Library staff are available to help you find relevant material through our literature search service. You can also connect directly with a library staff member in your area to help you quickly find an article for discussion.

Another easy way to find a relevant, full-text article quickly is to search the Library’s access point for Google Scholar. Enter general terms, such as your discipline and area of specialization, and the search results will highlight articles supplied by the library. If the library does not provide access to your chosen article, allow enough time for participants to request it through interlibrary loan.

When you locate an article that you’d like to share with your club, best practice is to provide a URL (website link) to the article or forward an email to others through the database the article was found in. Be mindful of copyright and adhere to best practices for sharing scholarly literature when distributing articles. Our Copyright guide outlines more tips to help you share your articles effectively.
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