General guidelines for Practice Blog submissions

Thank you for your interest in writing a guest post for Dietitians of Canada’s Practice Blog. We are excited to have you be a part of this exciting DC venture.

CONTENT:
Every member has interesting stories to tell. What do you want to share? Here are some ideas you could use as a starting point:

“A day in the life”: Do you work in an unusual or unique practice setting that readers might not be familiar with or have misconceptions about? Or maybe you work somewhere “typical” but have an “atypical” client population or story. Do you do something not normally considered dietetics? Or maybe you’re pushing the boundaries of what it means to be a dietitian. Share your journey. Share your day-to-day experiences. Inspire.

Research sharing: Have you recently been involved in research or evaluation? Tell us about your project. Why did you undertake it? What were you hoping to find out? Did you enjoy working on it? Why or why not? Regardless of the setting, we all work on projects that sometimes never get attention, shed some light on a project that you’re passionate about!

“Aha” moments: Here’s your chance to share your self-reflection. Did you have a specific experience, interaction with a client or colleague, success or failure that made you pause and say, “aha!”. Tell us your story and what your learning moment meant to you.

Travel: Did you have a travel experience (pleasure or professional) that questioned or reaffirmed your thoughts/positions/knowledge as a dietitian?

Program/community development: Were you involved in the planning/implementation/evaluation/promotion of a new program or community project? Tell us
about your experience. What were the challenges, rewards, successes, failures, outcomes, future implications for the program and for you!

**Student/intern experiences:** We want to hear from future dietitians. You may want to self-reflect on your entire student/intern experience (but take a unique point of view and not just a chronological retelling) or pick a particular experience that resonated with you and impacted your current or future choices. What advice do you have for your fellow students/new grads? Would you have done anything differently?

**Professional development experiences:** Did you attend a conference, workshop, presentation, seminar, course that is changing the way you practice or made you stop and pause? Tell us about it. What did you learn? What made it so fantastic? What can others get out of it?

**Advocacy/”hot” issues:** Is there a popular (or even unknown) food, nutrition, health or policy issue that you are passionate about? Tell us what you did to make a favourable change or bring attention to a new issue. This should not be about picking a hot topic and debating it. Instead share how you took action so that others can learn and initiate their own change.

These ideas are just some of the possibilities for sharing on the Practice Blog. Do you have an idea for something else? Please share!

**Other tips to help with your writing:**

- Use the “10 tips” or “5 things you need to know about” technique. If you’re having a hard time organizing your thoughts, create a list and share information that way.
- You may find it hard to resist writing absolutely everything about your experience. Pick a few key messages – what are the nugget(s) you want readers to take away. Also consider what might elicit some discussion.
- Subheadings tend to work well to break up the text, if they work for your post.
- Having trouble with words? Maybe images or video can tell your story better!

You may find inspiration in past Practice Blog posts.
STYLE:

- Create an eye-catching title. This is the first thing that readers see and it will help them decide if it is of interest to them.
- Don’t wait until the end of the posting to deliver your key message – put it first! Write in first person. This is your story. Be conversational and informal. Your voice does not have to be the same as any of the other blog posts. Be unique.
- Use whitespace and headings. Write in short paragraphs and stick to one key point (when applicable) per paragraph. People skim and scan more than read when they are online. Your thoughts need to make an impression quickly. One benefit of doing a blog is the opportunity to start a conversation. To do this, provide a call to action. Ask readers to contribute something in the comments, be it the sharing of a similar experience, idea, thought, link, reference, etc. Simply the act of asking for a comment will often elicit one.

HOUSEKEEPING:

Please include a byline with your name, title, where you work, and contact details (email, website, social media) you wish to share. And just for fun, why not something unique to you! A recent photo (headshot) would be nice too, as well as any other photos that fit into your post.

As the blog editor, I may edit your post. I will not rewrite your article, but may make grammatical changes, minor edits, title and other changes that will keep the article in line with the blog’s objective. If I have questions or would like you to expand on ideas, I will return it to you with suggestions. Please do not be offended. We will collaborate on the editing, and you will see and approve the final version before it goes live.

I will monitor comments on your post, but mostly to ensure that they are respectful and contribute to the integrity of the discussion. I may also make comments to keep the discussion moving forward. I would ask you to also monitor the comments so that a) you can see the response to your post and b) you can answer any questions readers may have.
This is an online medium so length is flexible. A good length to aim for is 750-950 words. However, the most important thing is that you say what you want to say irrespective of word count.

I welcome your feedback on your blog writing experience. What did you like/not like? What resources were helpful or where is there a gap? Do you feel like you had the opportunity to say what you wanted to say? What were the challenges? Would you do it again?

Please contact me (Melissa Baker) at any time during the process at practiceblog@dietitians.ca.

Thank you for contributing to Practice!