

CCSA's Issues of Substance Conference 2019

Tips for Developing Your Poster

Here are some suggestions you should consider in developing an effective poster. Posters should be:

- **Without electricity.** All posters are on standing boards, so there is no flat space available for computers.
- **Readable,** so that your poster is easily read from six feet away. Ensure your font size is no smaller than 24 pt; for headings and poster title, use a larger font size (a minimum of 48 pt and 64 pt, respectively). Remember to include authors' names and affiliations. Consider using a serif font (like Times New Roman or Baskerville) for text and a sans serif font (like Verdana, Arial or Trebuchet) for headings, titles, graph labels, etc.
- **Understandable.** Focus on the key points, with minimum use of jargon. Avoid using acronyms and abbreviations that make it difficult for participants to grasp your key points.
- **Logically organized** into sections with text and visuals that flow nicely from one section to the next. To help organize your sections, leave a sufficient amount of empty space between them.
- **To the point** with components that bring a focus to your work. Highlight the most important elements of your work in a clear and visually interesting manner.
- **Colourful** with carefully selected graphics and thoughtful use of colour to highlight key facts. Be cautious about the use of coloured text; it can be difficult to read unless printed with dark- coloured ink on a light background. Your best choice is a light background and dark text.
- **Visually engaging** so a passerby is attracted to the poster by the large, clear graphs, tables, photographs or other images that pertain to your work. You can use your own pictures or find them online at professional stock photo sites. Even without photos, data visualization and colour blocks behind important text are easy ways to enhance your poster visually.
- **Conversational in nature,** in language appropriate for a walking, interested attendee. (The language of a journal article is not suitable for a poster.) The references and URLs are not included on the poster; these can be placed on a supplementary handout.
- **Supplemented by a handout.** Consider bringing at least 50 copies of a one-page handout with your email or a link for more information. Poster presenters are responsible for the translation of their handouts.
- **Presenting your poster.** Attendees will want to browse many posters during your session so if you are providing a “run through” ensure it is brief (five minutes or less) and highlights the key messages you want to convey.

What Software Can I Use To Make a Poster?

Microsoft PowerPoint is a popular, user-friendly option to create a poster. You can set the dimensions for your poster in PowerPoint in the **Design** menu. In this menu, click **Slide Size** and then select from the dropdown options, **Custom Slide Size**. Remember that posters can be a maximum of 47” wide and 46” high.

Other software programs you can use include Microsoft Publisher, Abode Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop or Adobe InDesign.

These tips have been adapted from Potent Presentations, sponsored by the American Evaluation Association. *Guidelines for Posters*. Retrieved July 26, 2019, from <https://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/&fid=457>

Need Help with Your Poster?

You can email ios-info@ccsa.ca or call 1-833-235-4048 to speak with someone from CCSA for direct assistance.



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

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