11:00am: Session 2: Plain language writing

Chair: **Dr Jessica Orchard,** The University of Sydney

Plain language writing

Dr Julee McDonagh

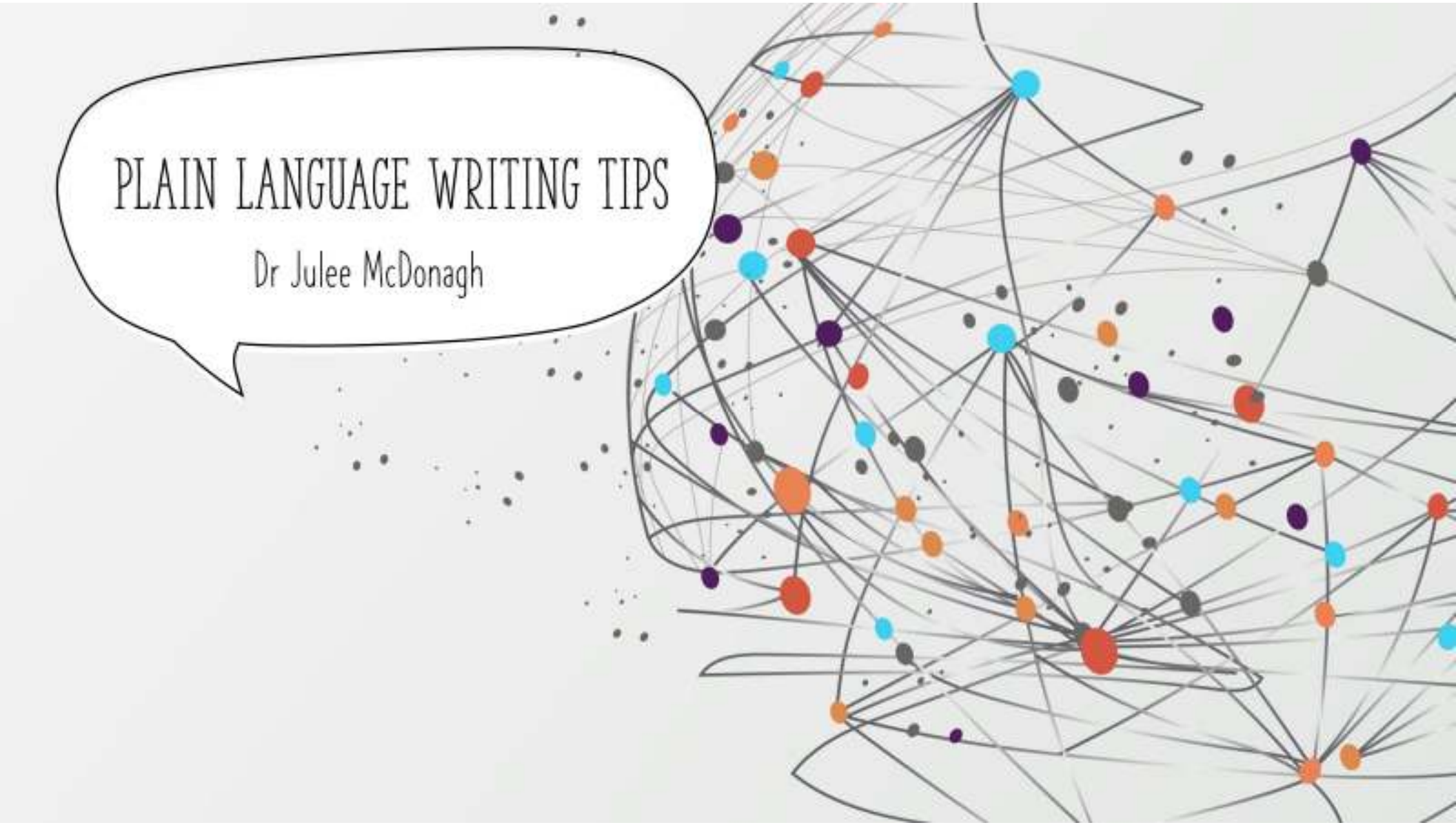
Senior Research Fellow (Frailty), School of Nursing, University of Wollongong

NSW Cardiovascular Research Network

NSW Government Health

PLAIN LANGUAGE WRITING TIPS

Dr Julee McDonagh



WHAT IS PLAIN LANGUAGE WRITING

Guidance from Australian Clinical Trials Alliance:
https://involvementtoolkit.clinicaltrialsalliance.org.au/toolkit/undertaking/writing-in-plain-language/

Plain language is a way of presenting information so that it makes sense and is easy to read for the intended audience. In the case of clinical research, the audience may be a specific patient population or the general public.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY -SIMPLIFYING YOUR MESSAGE

- Identify a key message from your research findings ...
- Think about how you would present this idea at a conference (write it down)
- Think about how you would explain it to a colleague (write it down)
- Think about how you would explain it to a friend / relative (write it down)
- Think about how you would you would explain it to a child (write it down)

EXAMPLES: WHAT IS FRAILTY?

Example 1:

Frailty is defined as a complex clinical syndrome of increased vulnerability to acute stressor events, such as community-acquired infections and iatrogenesis.

Example 2:

Frailty is a syndrome of 'accelerated ageing' that results in poor health outcomes and higher health system burden.

TOP TIPS FOR THIS GRANT OPPORTUNITY

- Think of the target audience (i.e., the reviewers!!)
- Avoid jargon and overly technical language
- Make sure the grab the reviewer's attention early!
- Use bold text and figures (where appropriate) to get your message across
- Ask a colleague outside your discipline/speciality area to review your application

TOP TIPS FOR THIS GRANT OPPORTUNITY

- Start writing early and block time out in your diary (if possible)
- Reach out to trusted colleagues and mentors to review – be respectful of their time
- Collate feedback early and manage version control (be prepared to write several versions)
- Use available resources at your institution - librarians can help gather research impact data!
- Be kind to yourself!

11:00am: Session 2: Plain language writing

Chair: **Dr Jessica Orchard,** The University of Sydney

Plain speaking: enhancing research communications

Prof Robert (Bob) M. Graham

Head, Molecular Cardiology Laboratory, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and Des Renford Professor of Medicine, UNSW

Victor Chang
Cardiac Research Institute

Plain Speaking: enhancing research communications

9 May 2024

Robert M. Graham

Overview

Enhancing research communications

- Clarity, clarity, clarity
- Generally, one idea, one sentence
- Elements to avoid
- The first page of a grant is absolutely critical
- Remember: reviewers may have limited knowledge of your research area (and may be tired or cranky).
- Graphical abstracts
- Edit, revise, re-write, ask colleagues to read and edit

Suggested/essential reading:
"*The Elements of Style*" by Strunk, White and Kalman

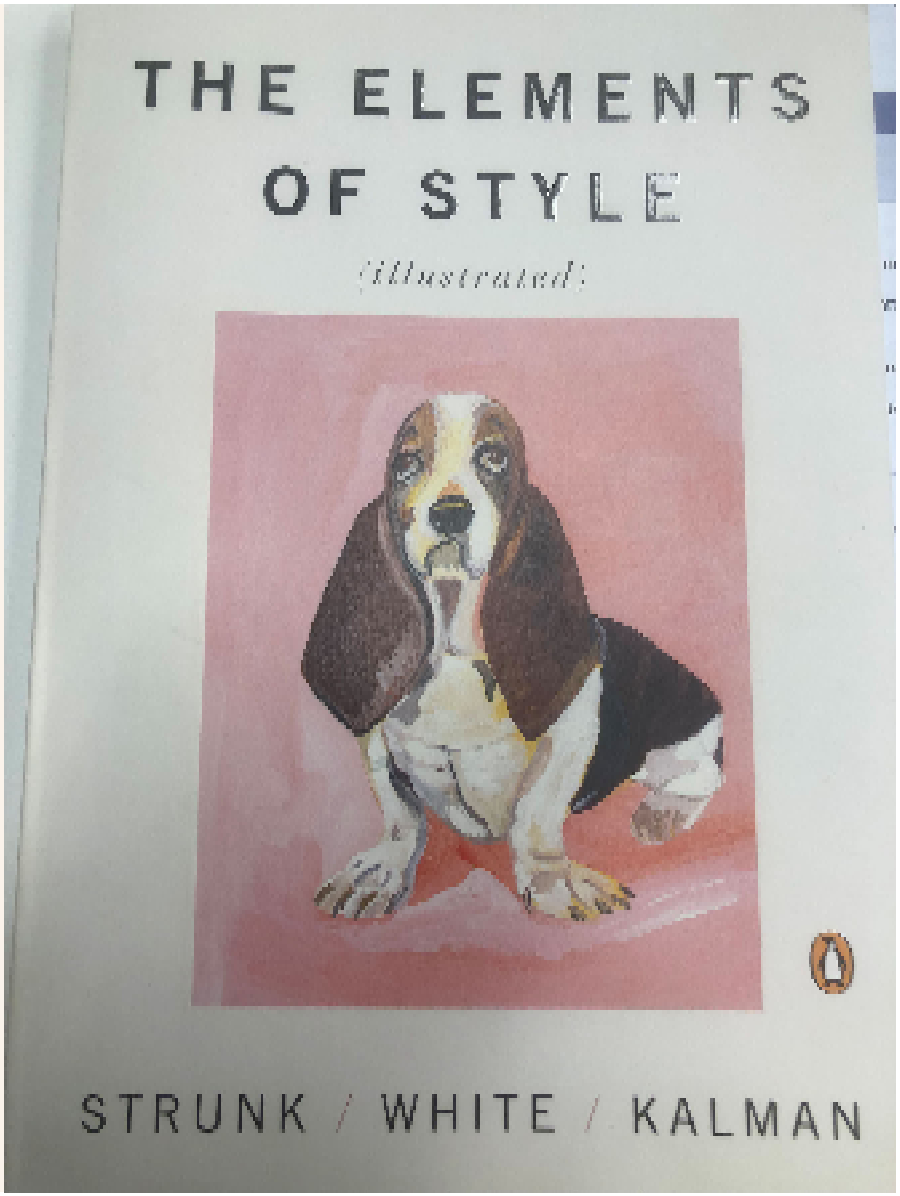
Read books by great authors, e.g.,
Richard Flanagan – wonderful writer, short sharp sentences, the words just flow off the page; won the 2014 Man Booker Prize for his novel: *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*

Simon Winchester – every paragraph is a gem; wrote *The Surgeon of Crowthorne* and *The Map that Changed the World: A tale of rocks, ruin and redemption*.

Merle Miller – *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman*

James H. Doolittle (with Carroll V. Vines) - *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*

John Simon – *Paradigms Lost: Reflections on Literacy and its Decline*


THE ELEMENTS
OF STYLE
(illustrated)
STRUNK / WHITE / KALMAN

Overview

Enhancing research communications

- Clarity, clarity, clarity - make headings and work from them

- The title is very important for capturing the readers attention.

"Genes associated with spontaneous coronary artery dissection that can kill women"

vs

"Defining genetic susceptibility to spontaneous coronary artery dissection: a potentially fatal female-predominant form of heart disease

Overview

Enhancing research communications

- Generally, one idea, one sentence – avoid complex, long-winded sentences

"SCAD results from a spontaneous bleed in the coronary arterial wall, which compresses the lumen as it expands, compromising blood flow and leading to myocardial ischaemia or infarction, or death."

vs

"SCAD results from a spontaneous bleed in the wall of a coronary artery. As the resulting haematoma expands, it compresses the lumen. This compromises blood flow leading to myocardial ischaemia or infarction, or death".

Overview

Enhancing research communications

- Elements to avoid: ambiguity; passive voice; qualifying clauses at the beginning (end with a bang not a whimper); judgmental statements; too many acronyms; capital letters

Scientific writing MUST be unambiguous

- Be precise – don't leave ideas open to interpretation!!!

Active voice is usually more direct, bold and vigorous:

- "*My first visit to Hobart will always be remembered to me*" (passive) vs "*I shall always remember my first visit to Hobart*" (active)

Put qualifying clauses at the beginning:

- "*To generate iPSCs, blood samples were collected and informed consent was obtained*" vs "*After obtaining informed consent, blood samples were collected to generate iPSCs*"

- "*Steel is principally used for making razors, because of its hardness*" vs "*Because of its hardness, steel is principally used for making razors*"

Avoid judgemental terms:

- "*This **massive** increase in blood pressure explains why the animals developed stroke …..*" (let the reader judge magnitude)

Capital letters should ONLY be used for:

- The first letter of the first word of a sentence, for proper nouns and acronyms:
  "*Spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD) is a cause of acute coronary syndrome,*" said George.

Overview

Enhancing research communications

- The first page of a grant is absolutely critical

The first page is key – must have:

i) Title

ii) Hypotheses

iii) Aims

iv) Innovation

v) Outcomes and significance

vi) Team

Overview

Enhancing research communications

- Remember: reviewers may have limited knowledge of your research area (and may be tired or cranky). Make it easy for them, write as if you are explaining the work to them in person

Ask colleagues with expertise outside of the direct area of your grant to read and edit your grant

Better to get criticism (hopefully constructive) from your colleagues than from the reviewers

Overview

Enhancing research communications

- A graphical abstract is very useful for concisely presenting what your application is all about (*a picture is worth a thousand words*)

- Graphical abstracts can be difficult to make but help you present you ideas concisely and clearly.

  While there may not be room to use them in your grant application, they can be an excellent guide for you writing

But if you use a graphical abstract, makes sure it's large enough to be easily seen without having to markedly enlarge the figure

Overview

Enhancing research communications

- Edit, revise, re-write, ask colleagues to read and edit

- Before you start writing, read the directions very carefully and make notes of the key issues. Ask yourself:
  What exactly is the granting agency looking for with this type of grant?

- Even the very best writers don't get it right the first time:
  Edit, revise and re-write - often several times. It's rare to get it all right the first time, so: edit, revise, re-write, and then do it again

- Always use grammar and spell checks:
  nothing is more irritating than lots of typos

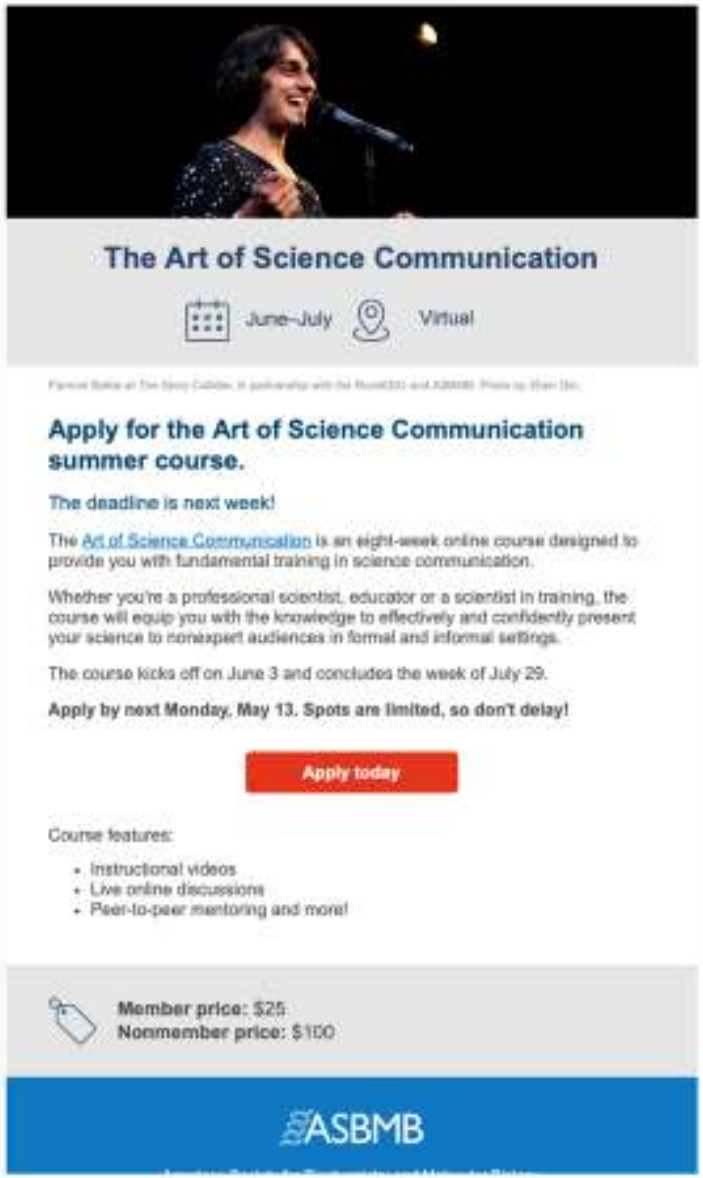
- Punctuation and apostrophes are important:
  The "traffic cops" of good writing

- Use hyphens:
  "state-of-the-art"; "turn-of-the–century" ; " leisure-class pursuits"

- Use italics to indicate foreign language words:
  e.g., *"fetal"* (from Latin; *not "foetal";* Greek is *"embryo"); "in vitro"; "in vivo"*

- Avoid jargon and cliches:
  "Up regulate" ; "thinking outside the box" ; in the "foreseeable future"

Overview


The Art of Science Communication
June–July
Virtual
Apply for the Art of Science Communication summer course.
The deadline is next week!
The Art of Science Communication is an eight-week online course designed to provide you with fundamental training in science communication.
Whether you're a professional scientist, educator or a scientist in training, the course will equip you with the knowledge to effectively and confidently present your science to nonexpert audiences in formal and informal settings.
The course kicks off on June 3 and concludes the week of July 29.
Apply by next Monday, May 13. Spots are limited, so don't delay!
Apply today
Course features:
Instructional videos
Live online discussions
Peer-to-peer mentoring and more!
Member price: $25
Nonmember price: $100
ASBMB

Victor Chang
Cardiac Research Institute

THANKS and good luck!!!

11:00am: Session 2: Plain language writing

Chair: **Dr Jessica Orchard,** The University of Sydney

Questions for Speakers

Dr Julee McDonagh

Prof Robert (Bob) M. Graham

Raise your hand or submit via Teams chat or QR Code above

NSW GOVERNMENT

Heart Foundation

NSW Cardiovascular Research Network

CVRN Rising Stars Masterclass

Plain Language Writing

Tuesday 18 June
OR
Wednesday 19 June 2024

10am – 4pm

Express your interest here:
tinyurl.com/u3ffu8xc

11:30am: Session 3: Skills development, leadership and capacity building (grant application section F)

Chair: **Prof Andrew Boyle,** Chair of the NSW CVRN Executive Committee

Skills development (EMCR applications)

Dr Xia Wang

Doctoral Research Fellow, The George Institute

Skills development in NSW Health EMCR grant application

The George Institute for Global Health Australia

Xia Wang

Senior research fellow, the George Institute

Identify key points that you need to answer

Describe how this grant will help you develop skills and build your career.
Examples of skill development, leadership and capacity building activities are provided in the Guidelines (maximum 600 words).

Please include details of:

- Skill development and leadership activities you have undertaken to date in your career
- how you would use this gran to develop your skills in research and leadership and build research capacity in NSW.

Answer structure

- Introduction
- Section 1: Skill Development and Leadership Activities Undertaken to Date
- Section 2: Proposed Skill Development and Career Building Activities
- Conclusion

Answer structure – introduction (50-75 words)

- Brief introduction, highlighting your current role and area of research.
- Mention your years of experience post-PhD to position yourself within the target category of the grant

Answer structure –Skill development and leadership activities undertaken to date (150-200 words)

- Past training and skill acquisition
  - ✓ Detail the specific skills and knowledge you've developed throughout your career, focusing on those that align with the grant's objectives
- Leadership experience
  - ✓ Describe your leadership roles, including any projects or teams you have led. Highlight any mentorship or training you provided to others, showing your capacity to lead and develop talent

Answer structure – Proposed skill development and career building activities (300-350 words)

- Future Skill Enhancement
  - ✓ Discuss the specific skills you aim to develop with the grant
- Research Project or Initiative
  - ✓ Outline a specific project or initiative you plan to undertake with the grant
- Leadership and Capacity Building
  - ✓ Explain how you will use the grant to enhance your leadership abilities and contribute to building research capacity in your region or institution
- Impact on NSW
  - ✓ Make sure to connect your plans to the broader goals of the grant, such as enhancing the research landscape in NSW, addressing specific health issues, or building scientific capacity

Answer structure –Conclusion (25-50 words)

- Conclude by summarizing the impact the grant would have on your career and on the broader research community in NSW
- Reinforce your commitment to contributing to your field and the potential long-term benefits of your proposed activities

Key tips

- Future Skill Enhancement Be Specific
  - ✓ Provide clear examples and be precise about how the grant will benefit your specific activities
- Align with Grant Objectives
  - ✓ Make sure your goals are aligned with the priorities of the grant to illustrate how your plans are relevant
- Show Impact on NSW
  - ✓ Highlight the potential impact of your research and development activities not just on your career, but also on the wider community or field
- Proofread
  - ✓ Ensure your proposal is well-written and free of errors to convey professionalism and attention to detail

The George Institute for Global Health Australia

Thank you for listening

11:30am: Session 3: Skills development, leadership and capacity building (grant application section F)

Chair: **Prof Andrew Boyle,** Chair of the NSW CVRN Executive Committee

Skills development (EMCR applications)

Dr Ashish Misra

Atherosclerosis and Vascular Remodelling Unit Leader, Heart Research Institute

NSW Cardiovascular Research Network

NSW GOVERNMENT Health

Skills development, leadership and capacity building (grant application section F)

Dr Ashish Misra, Atherosclerosis and Vascular Remodelling
Heart Research Institute (HRI)

Section F

- Skills : What you know
  - Techniques, models, data analysis, publications
- Leadership activities: What you do
  - Committee membership, event organisation, editorial boards, peer-review(notable journals) teaching/supervision
- Capacity development: What you have done for others
  - Student supervision, knowledge exchange and recruiting junior researchers

Tips:

1) Take opportunities when they present - suited to your time and capabilities
2) Give details e.g. Institution name, duration of time, funding/fellowships that led to skills development, impact of your work

Everyone has skills and leadership experience but sometimes we forget what we have done...

Developing your skills and leadership

- Go back to your skills:
  - Will this project build on existing skills or give you new expertise?
  - Will the collaboration help you learn new things to pivot your research area?
- Will this project widen your networks? How will this help you in the future?
  - E.g. job prospects, more opportunities for funding, generate pilot data so you can apply for bigger grants
- What is it that is new that you are bringing to NSW?
  - E.g. new jobs, techniques, outcomes, collaboration, consumer engagement

Thank You

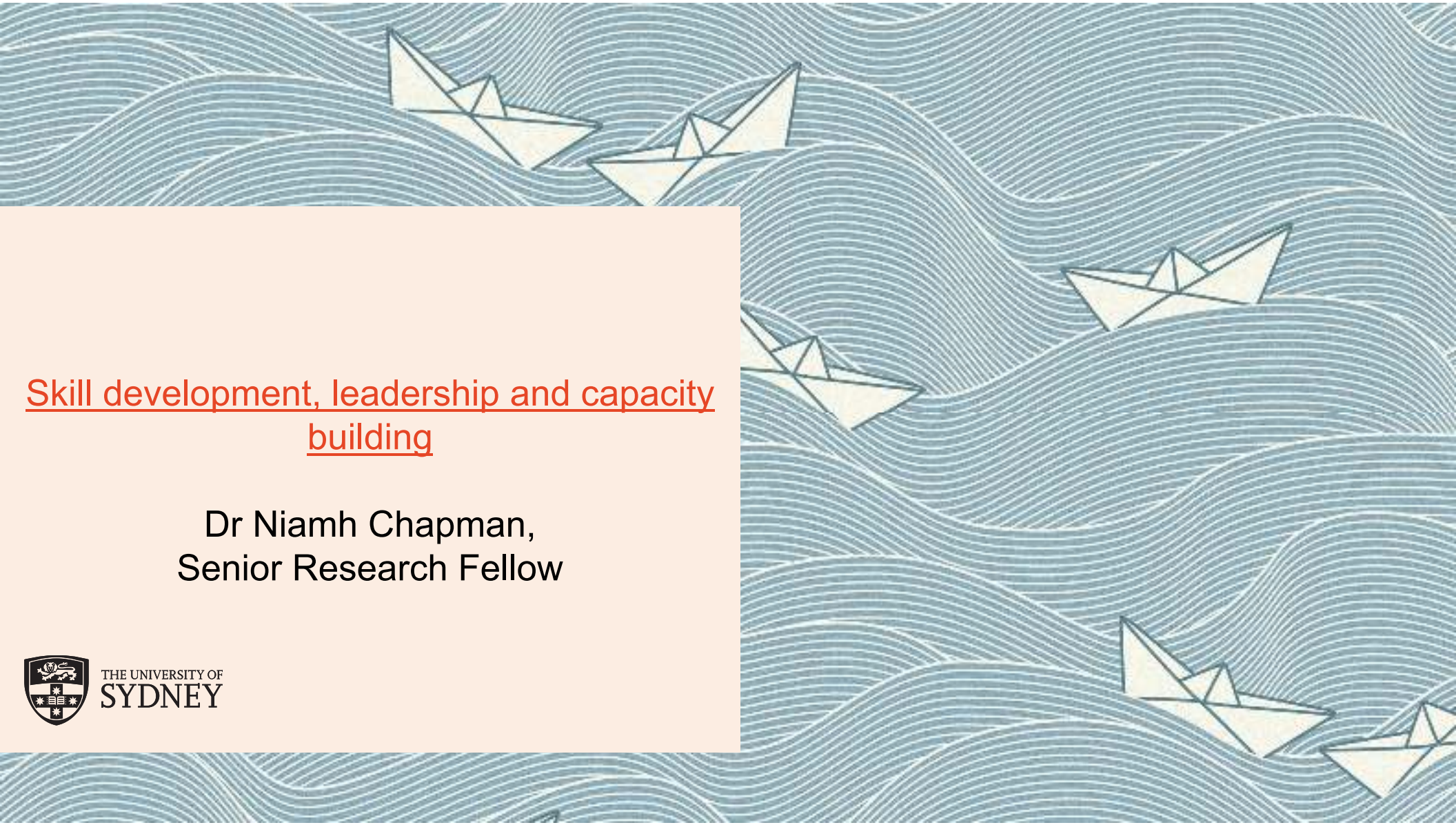
11:30am: Session 3: Skills development, leadership and capacity building (grant application section F)

Chair: **Prof Andrew Boyle,** Chair of the NSW CVRN Executive Committee

Skills development (EMCR applications)

Dr Niamh Chapman

Senior Research Fellow, the University of Sydney,
Heart Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellow



Skill development, leadership and capacity building

Dr Niamh Chapman,
Senior Research Fellow

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Skill development and leadership activities to date in your career.

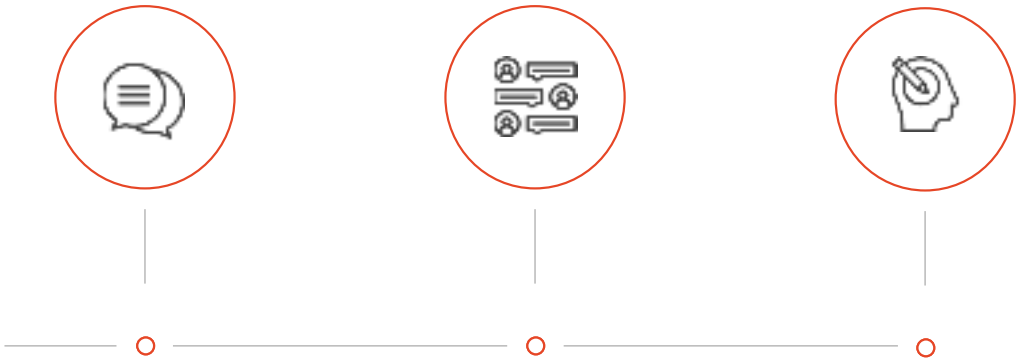
- Showcase your leadership and networks at this stage of your career.
- Create a narrative of growth.
- Showcase your unique skills and how they were developed.

Thesaurus Plus

Reflect on how you can move forward

- **INDULGE** in your own development.
- What skills do you need to lean into?
- What courses would you love to do and why?
- What networks can you engage with?

Your team, how can everyone have the opportunity to develop?



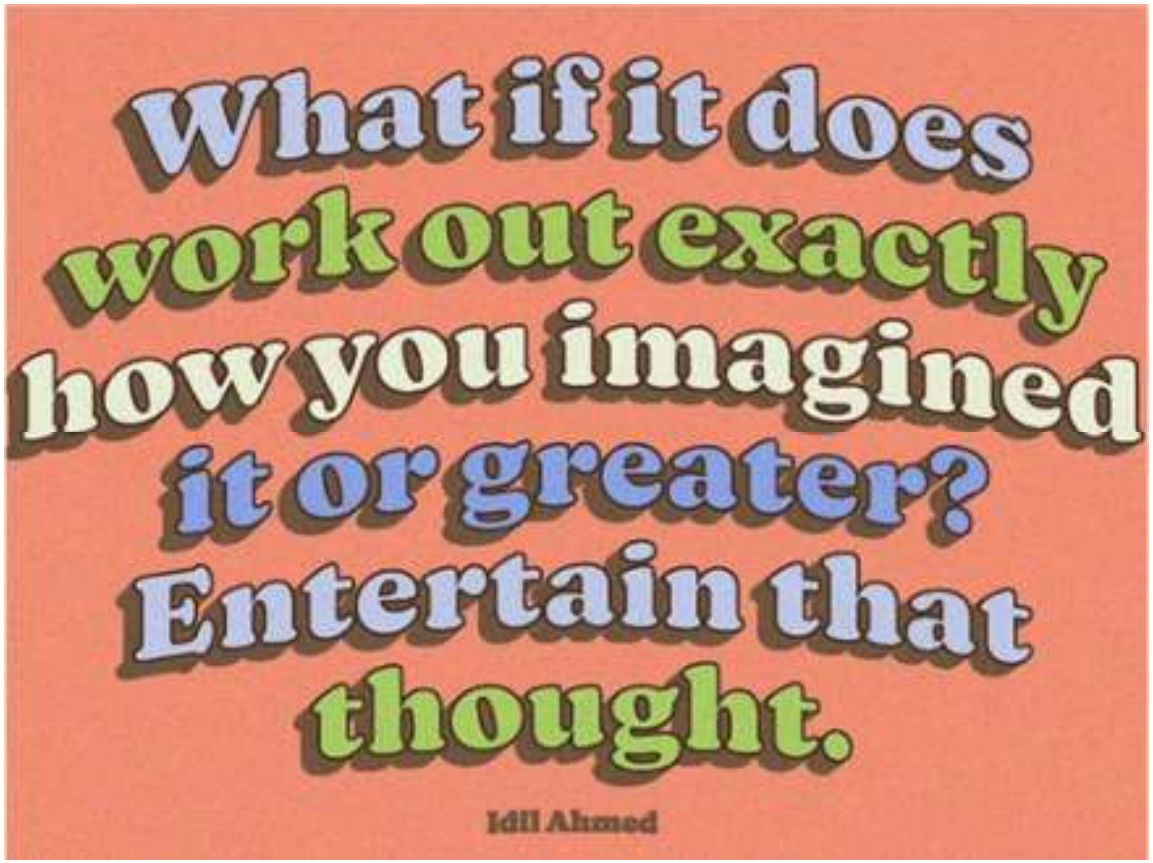
WORKSHOPS
Develop specific skills

NETWORKING and MENTORING
Within and outside the team.

LEADING
Assigning specific parts of the project to others.

Build capacity in NSW

- Leverage your networks and leadership
- Share your expertise
- Identify priority areas e.g. clinicians
- Partner with other organisations
- Community



Enjoy the process

Think big

Work hard and back yourself

Niamh.Chapman@sydney.edu.au

11:30am: Session 3: Skills development, leadership and capacity building (grant application section F)

Chair: **Prof Andrew Boyle,** Chair of the NSW CVRN Executive Committee

Leadership and Capacity Building (Senior applications)

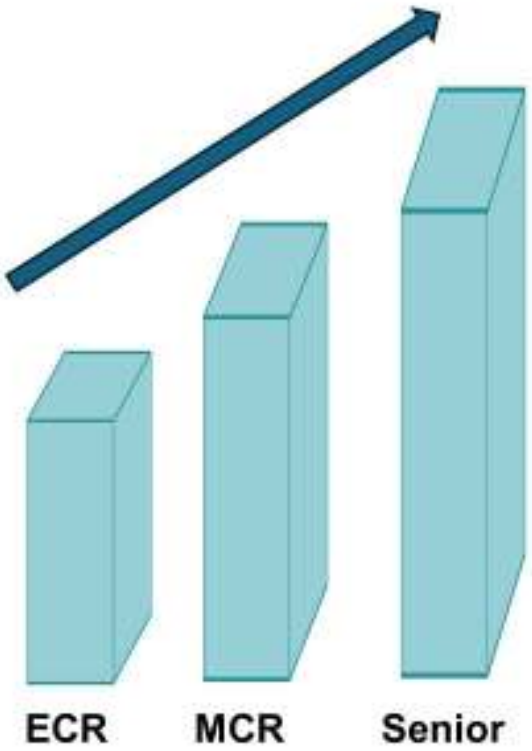
Prof Kerry-Anne Rye

Deputy Head, School of Biomedical Sciences, Head of the Cardiometabolic Research Group, UNSW

Leadership and Capacity Building: Senior Scientists

Kerry-Anne Rye
School of Medical Sciences
Faculty of Medicine
UNSW Sydney

Career Trajectory and Leadership



What is the pathway to leadership?

How to reach a position of leadership

- Always be proactive
- Effective communication
- Motivate and mentor
- Be organized (time management)
- Strategic decision making
- Be creative and open minded
- Delegate
- Take calculated risks and know when to call it quits
- Treat failure as a learning experience
- Learn how to say “No”

Capacity Building

- Prepare compelling, clearly written grant applications
- Develop productive collaborations
- Engage in commercial partnerships
- Build national and international partnerships
- Engage with stake holders
- Translate outcomes into improved health
- Be a good mentor
- Philanthropy

Enjoy the journey!!!

11:30am: Session 3: Skills development, leadership and capacity building (grant application section F)

Chair: **Prof Andrew Boyle,** Chair of the NSW CVRN Executive Committee

Leadership and Capacity Building (Senior applications)

Prof Ben Freedman

Director External Affairs, Heart Research Institute, Honorary Professor of Cardiology, the University of Sydney

11:30am: Session 3: Skills development, leadership and capacity building (grant application section F)

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Prof Kerry-Anne Rye

Prof Ben Freedman

Raise your hand or submit via Teams chat or QR Code above

NSW Cardiovascular Research Network

NSW GOVERNMENT Health

NSW CVRN – OHMR Grants Workshop

Lunch break

Back at 1:30pm

1:30pm: Session 4 Panel: Tips from successful Senior Researchers and experienced Grant Reviewers

Facilitator: **Prof Kazuaki Negishi,** Head of Medicine at Nepean Clinical School

Prof Jenny Gamble

Head of Vascular Biology Program, Wenkart Chair of Endothelium Medicine, Centenary Institute

NSW Cardiovascular Research Network

NSW GOVERNMENT Health

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Facilitator: **Prof Kazuaki Negishi,** Head of Medicine at Nepean Clinical School

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NSW GOVERNMENT Health

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Raise your hand or submit via Teams chat or QR Code above

NSW Cardiovascular Research Network

NSW GOVERNMENT Health

1:45pm: Recap and closing remarks

Cathy Kellick

Principal Policy Officer for Research Grants

Office for Health and Medical Research

NSW Cardiovascular Research Network

NSW GOVERNMENT Health

NSW CVRN – OHMR Grants Workshop

Thank you for your participation!

Please join us for afternoon tea