

WRITING YOUR FIRST JOURNAL ARTICLE

Submissions
due July 15



Writing an article for an academic journal accomplishes several things. First, it is a wonderful way to give back to the field and share your unique perspective and experiences with those who could potentially benefit. Some might argue such altruism for the professional community is one of best ways to continue to grow and engage as a professional and take pride in your daily work.

In this brief guide, I'd like to take the opportunity to encourage you to consider submitting a journal article to *The Journal of Campus Behavioral Intervention (JBIC)*, as well as address any hesitations you may have about academic writing. The goal here is to help you overcome obstacles you might have about submitting, as well as provide some practical advice to take that first (and second, and third) step forward in the process.

As with anything new, you may experience an element of fear, worry, or concern. I frequently hear new authors say things like, "I don't think people would be interested in this idea," "I don't know that I have the time to write something," or "I want to, but I just can't think of what I would write." As with many things in life, this initial anxiety can be the most nerve-racking aspect of the entire process, and once that initial hurdle is overcome, the process of writing and creation becomes a much smoother one.

I wanted to write this guide to encourage those who were on the proverbial fence when it comes to writing for an academic journal. It's my hope that this guide encourages you to hop that fence and get your first journal article published with *JBIC*. As we move forward, I would like to walk you through three common approaches for narrowing down and selecting a topic and some helpful hints for moving from topic selection through content development to publication.



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JBIC is an annual periodical that publishes around 6–10 articles yearly.

The journal is practitioner-focused and actively looking for new submissions.

The ideal time to submit is during the spring semester and early summer. Your article will receive the full attention of the editorial board to ensure the best possible version is published.

We are looking for a diverse selection, including opinion pieces, case studies, book reviews, best practices, and emerging trends, as well as thesis and dissertation topics.

This journal is published for the membership of NaBITA, so as a member of the association, you already understand the target audience.

3 APPROACHES TO FINDING A TOPIC

1 Write about what you know. The old adage here applies well. Consider identifying something that you do well and writing about that. This could be something you have done many times before, such as an analysis of an at-risk behavior or threat assessment, a certain kind of conduct meeting, or the case management process. While you may not find the topic particularly ground-breaking or feel that it isn't solving some unique problem in the field, there are many new professionals who are hungry for this kind of insight for approaching their daily work. Such articles add context to the work they are doing and reassurance about whether or not they are "doing it right."

What skills or practices do you engage in regularly? Have you developed an effective way of completing your work or found a way to boost efficiency? While you may not feel that this information and experience would be useful to other experts in the field, consider how valuable such insights may have been to you earlier in your career, and how they could help those who are currently new to this work.

2 Write about a unique story. Consider sharing that story about your favorite — or perhaps not so favorite — case you've encountered. These cases can serve as wonderful training and tabletop exercises for professionals at other college and universities and allow them to consider how they might handle a similar situation. Some of the most frequent threads on listservs start with interesting cases for which there aren't always clear answers for moving forward.

There are typically two types of case studies: those highlighting what you have done well and those highlighting missteps and things you wished you had done better. Both can foster conversation and debate. However, while it is tempting to want to share stories in which your institution or team acted in an exemplary and insightful manner, readers frequently tell us that the real learning comes from stories in which the college or team didn't get it quite right. So remember, people can learn from your missteps as much as your expert handling of a case.

3 Write about something you have to do. One of my first writing projects in higher education involved developing website content for a counseling center. This was not something I had ever done before, and I started the project with very little understanding of what should be included on the website. Launching the website took several months of investigation and development on my part. I didn't know what I was doing at first, but, by the time the site was completed, I had become the resident expert on creating a college counseling website.

One approach to journal writing is to take an existing or past project with which you have been tasked, such as developing a logo for your campus BIT, conducting a quality assurance review of your BIT processes, or creating a suicide prevention or post-vention program for your students, and sharing your hard-earned knowledge on how you survived what may have been a particularly difficult or unfamiliar process. The tougher the challenge, the more valuable what you learned will be to others.

5 TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

1. Make an outline. Creating an outline of the concepts you want to get across in the article can provide you with a road-map to get you from beginning to end and ease the anxiety you may experience when you first sit down to write. Start with an empty piece of paper or work document and create some categories. These can be basic, like the Introduction, Methods, or Conclusion, or more specifically tied to your topic. Brainstorm what content should go under each category and in what order. This will help you to organize your thoughts and develop a plan for moving forward.

2. Find a hook. This could be something basic, such as, “The Dos and Don’ts of a Chairing a BIT,” or something like, “Seven Common Missteps for Behavioral Intervention Teams.” The idea is to draw the reader in through a list of things to do (or not to do) related to your topic of choice. The hook can serve as a point of focus for your article, a jumping-off point in your lead or introduction, or even the title of your final product. Just remember not to bury your hook.

3. Use your editor. Your first draft doesn’t have to be perfect.

JBIT was created to encourage scholarship in the field, and promote the sharing of expertise. The journal’s Editorial Board members were selected specifically for their ability to help authors polish their content through constructive and helpful feedback. They are not here to be overly critical or test out their red pens. Consider them mentors, who can provide solution-focused guidance to move your article from first draft to finished product.

4. Pair up. Think about co-authoring an article with someone who has written for an academic journal before. Peruse through previous journals for articles related to your topic of choice, or attend a conference session related to journal writing to find a potential writing partner. This is a great way to learn the ropes of writing and share the load. If research isn’t your strong point, but you excel at writing narrative, consider pairing up with a research guru and dividing the work based on each person’s strengths. Also, consider partnering up with a faculty member at your institution. Many professors must meet publishing requirements as part of their tenure application and have a strong background in writing and research. As a practitioner, you may bring the details and experience to the table, whereas the faculty member can provide the writing prowess and research experience.

5. Email me. This is your invitation to email me at brian@nchem.org to talk more about your ideas and how to get published. We have many resources to help augment your research, find potential writing partners with similar research interest, and turn rough ideas into focused topics. So let’s talk!

ARTICLE IDEAS

The following list provides article ideas to get you brainstorming possible topics you might feel comfortable writing about for *JBIT*. However, please do not feel constrained to these topics, and remember that if you are unsure about an idea, we're happy to serve as a sounding board.

- Key Considerations for Using the NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool
- What I Wish I Knew When I Started Our BIT
- BIT Leadership Qualities
- A Case Study on Suicide and Hospitalizations
- Working Online BIT Cases
- The Assessment of the BIT
- Tell Them About It: BIT Advertising
- The Intersection of BIT and Title IX
- Overcoming Obstacles: The Role of the Counselor on the BIT
- Intervening Basics in Threat Assessment
- BIT and Community Colleges: Challenges for Practice
- Working with Community College Populations on the BIT
- How to Intervene Effectively after Using the NaBITA Tool
- Responding to a Suicide on Campus
- Addressing Burnout and Stress of BIT Members



Additional submission information can be found at <https://nabita.org/resources/j-bit/>.