

THE POCKET GUIDE TO GETTING YOUR ARTICLE PUBLISHED

by Sylvia Cary, MFT

You've spent years honing your skills as a health professional. You may even be seen as an expert in a "niche" area, like addiction, child abuse, anger management, or relationships. You have a lot to say. So don't keep what you know a secret! Why not publish an article (or even a book) that can help lots of people and boost your practice. After all, being "the author of" something that's in print does give one a certain aura, a certain panache.

Getting published in a magazine (and there are thousands of them, all hungry for material) isn't as hard as you may think. Unlike "show biz", you don't need a brother-in-law in the business to get your work read. If you go by the clearly spelled-out rules, you can approach magazines, publishers, and agents, and end up seeing your name - if not in lights, at least in print. And P.S. You don't need an agent for article sales.

If you're a first-time article writer, here's my "quick list" of tips:

1. Pick the topic you want to write about. If you can predict the next "hot" topic in the media, that's a plus.
2. Find something "new" you want to say about your topic (your angle, slant or twist). Think "service" - i.e., how will your article help readers.
3. Pick out (to start) ten magazines you'd like to be published in. Look at masthead for the address, and for the name of the Articles/Feature editor.
4. Compose a 1-page, 3 or 4-paragraph, single-space query letter (your sales pitch). In the 1st paragraph, give article title and topic. In the 2nd paragraph, say how you are going to handle the topic and what's unique about your approach. In the 3rd paragraph, give a few details. You can use bullet-points. In the 4th paragraph, explain who you are, and why you are the one to write this article (self-hype OK here). If you've been published before, say

so, and include a copy (called a "clip") of your published article - even if it's just a Xerox of a CAMFT Newsletter article.

5. Send off all ten query letters. Include a SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope) in each. This is very important, and very polite.

6. Track responses. It's OK to follow up after a month if you haven't heard back. For each rejection you get, send out another query letter. As in everything, persistence wins out!

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Bio:

Sylvia Cary, MFT, is a Los Angeles area licensed psychotherapist and writer and has been a member of The Scriptwriters Network for nearly a decade. She was the winner of the 2003 Carl Sautter Screenwriting Competition (for Features). She is the author of 4 books, 5 educational films, and numerous articles in national magazines. She is currently "book-doctoring" and writing script coverage for a film distribution company. She can be contacted at sylvia@sylviacary.com. Her website is: www.TherapistsWhoWrite.com.