

## Writing Tips for LNCs

To be successful as a legal nurse consultant, you must master the ability to write clearly. In this podcast, I share the writing tips that led to my successful career as an LNC.

I'm Pat Iyer, an LNC with 28 years of experience working with attorneys. I built and sold a large, successful LNC business.

Attorneys and legal nurse consultants share one thing in common: the need to write clearly for an audience that has a different background.

Attorneys write for nonlawyers; legal nurse consultants write for lawyers. Each group has its own unique way of looking at the world. Each group must communicate that view to others of different backgrounds. These are some of the clearest ways to improve writing.

How would you like to create a report in half the time without losing quality? When you labor over a report and pile up the hours, you are often at risk of having to fight to get paid for all those hours.

### **Create an outline for faster writing**

What type of report are you creating? Is it

1. Expert witness
2. Screening a medical malpractice case
3. Medical summary
4. Summary of medical research

Having a plan and an outline enables you to tackle procrastination. Your brain may tell you the project is too big, making you want to avoid getting started. Your plan breaks the project down into smaller steps. It keeps you focused so you don't wander off topic.

## **Let your plan percolate**

Letting your plan rest for an hour or a day will help your subconscious work on it. You may be taking a walk when you suddenly see an approach to your report. Giving it some distance allows your mind to process and analyze your approach.

## **Know when you are most productive**

Some LNCs love to write in the morning. They find they can accomplish faster writing when they are fresh. Others prefer a quiet house at night when the family is settled.

## **Turn off distractions**

**I mean it.** Turn off the ringer on your phone and turn it face down. You can so easily get distracted by the internet. You think you will check it for 5 minutes, and before you know it, you will be way down a rabbit hole. You will not have gotten back to your report.

## **Know your client's deadlines**

The most powerfully written report is of no value if it is late. Your client often has non-negotiable deadlines. Deadlines add stress. Without a deadline, you may procrastinate, and your stress level goes up. Deadlines are dead serious in the legal world.

## **Focus on how good it will feel**

You'll find your ability to accomplish faster writing ramps up when you think of the rewards. See yourself depositing that check from the attorney in your bank account. Think of your client's thanks when you get your report in before the deadline.

## **Break a large report down into pieces that you work on every day**

Work on your report even when you don't feel like it. Tackle the hard parts in phases.

Stephen King said, “Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration. The rest of us just get up and go to work.”

If technology ineptness is slowing you down, learn how to type faster. Some LNCs I know use voice recognition software to write faster.

The more you work on cases, the better you get at seeing the heart of the case, outlining your thoughts and writing. You will enjoy the process more and find it easier.

Now I will focus on how to write. Here are my top 7 writing tips.

1. **Use simple, direct language.** Avoid confusing terms, such as “herein”, “aforementioned”, and “execute”. I remember a deposition in which the plaintiff was asked if he executed the document. He was clearly bewildered when he replied, “Did I do *what* to the document?” When we use simple terms in our writing, it carries over to our speech. Define medical terms.
2. **Avoid long, convoluted sentences.** The reader may forget the point by the time he gets to the end of the sentence. Sentences that fill a paragraph cry out to be broken into pieces. The average sentence length should be between 20 to 25 words.
3. **Define your points at the beginning of a paragraph to give the reader a road map.** And then explain each point, in the order in which you first presented them.
4. **Avoid idiosyncratic capitalization.** I see terms like “Standard of Care”, “Nurse”, and “Hospital” capitalized in sentences when the lower-case form is proper.
5. **Provide summaries to define the main points.** Summaries should be at the beginning and the end of the document. I think you’ve heard that expression as it applies to making a presentation: tell them what you are going to tell them. Tell them. Then tell them what you told them.
6. **Define terms that are going to be unfamiliar to your reader.** Will Rogers said, “Everyone is ignorant, just about different stuff.” The goal of communication is to state something in a way that the reader/client will understand.

**7. Activate the readability statistics in your word processor.** Don't exceed 10% use of passive voice sentences. The active voice is direct. Passive voice is cumbersome. "He was taken to the operating room" is passive. "He went to the operating room" is active.

Before we continue the show, let me focus on a problem some LNCs have. And this might be yours.

You're a legal nurse consultant who wants to build a strong business – and yet you've got a problem.

- You avoid networking
- You feel uncomfortable networking, or
- You'd love to network but you don't know where to meet attorneys.
- You feel stuck. You know that being able to speak with attorneys is essential for building your business and you want to know a process that is effective.

Yes, you can read networking books, but they are not tailored to helping legal nurse consultants.

They don't address the specifics of our industry.

Announcing my latest book: *Networking for LNCs: Meet Contacts, Build Relationships and Turn Your Connections into Profits.*

- Would you like to increase your client base and get more cases from existing clients?
- Would you like to know proven strategies that exponentially increase your success as a legal nurse consultant?
- Would it be helpful to find the types of offline and online venues that are great opportunities for you to meet attorneys?
- Would you be interested in knowing what blocks you have that might be sabotaging your networking efforts?

Get your copy of this brand-new book, released in March 2020, at this link: [LNC.tips/networkingbook](http://LNC.tips/networkingbook).

You've efficiently moved through the process. You've written your report in a clear way. Now you need to proofread it.

Have you ever made a cringe-worthy typo? I have. Embarrassing typos reflect on your expertise for creating detailed-oriented reports and other work product for attorneys. Knowing how to proofread your work product makes the difference between something that makes you ashamed and something that makes you proud.

Sound harsh? There are a lot of typos in everyday signs, on the internet and in ads – who cares? Attorneys do. It is not acceptable to turn in work with typos. Period. End of story.

Google also cares. Websites with typos get lower rankings.

Having said that, no one is perfect. My goal is to be as clear and accurate as possible. I use some techniques to proofread that you might find valuable.

1. **Proofread when you are fresh.** Is this when you first wake up? Right after dinner? Do this work when you are most alert and able to focus.
2. **Avoid last-minute proofing.** Whenever possible, write your report, walk away from it and look at it again the next day. I know, sometimes attorneys are in a rush, but you will do a better job proofing if you allow the report to settle overnight before you look at it again.
3. **Print it out.** It is easier for most writers to spot errors on paper rather than on a monitor. Get out the red pen and go to work.
4. I'm going to assume for these tips that you are writing a report. **Look at it in stages.** For example, you might first read the body of the report for typos that spell check does not catch. You know those pesky ones, like int he, and form versus from and trial versus trail.
5. That is my next point. You may habitually make the same mistakes. **Look for the words you commonly misspell.**
6. After looking at the body of the report, **look at the headers.** Make sure you are consistently capitalizing the major words in your headers. If you use subheads, the first word of the subhead is capitalized.

7. **Look for consistency.** One of the common errors I have seen is experts not being consistent in writing dates. Pick one method and stick with it. Either write out the month in letters or use numbers, but don't use both systems in one document.

8. Look for what I call **idiosyncratic capitalization.** Don't capitalize the names of medical diagnoses or surgeries, unless the diagnosis is a person's name, like Alzheimer's disease.

9. **Have someone else with excellent proofreading skills read your report** – a spouse, trusted friend, another LNC – just to get a different perspective and to make sure you did not miss anything obvious.

10. People are very touchy about wanting their names to be spelled and pronounced correctly. Just yesterday someone called me Mrs. Iyler. I really dislike being called Mrs. Lyer. What a bad name for an expert witness! **Be sure the attorney's name is spelled correctly.**

Use these proofreading tips to gain mastery of what is the final stage of any LNC work product.

I'd love for you to be among the first to get my newest book, *Networking for LNCs*. Get your copy by going to [LNC.tips/networkingbook](http://LNC.tips/networkingbook).

Do you have lots of questions about being a legal nurse consultant? Are you wondering how to get clients, grow and manage a business, and dig into medical records? Do you feel a bit lost?

I've got a phenomenal resource for you just waiting on [LegalNurseBusiness.com](http://LegalNurseBusiness.com). My online training and books are designed to help you discover ways to strengthen your skills and businesses. Check them out at [legalnursebusiness.com](http://legalnursebusiness.com).

Could you use a monthly boost of knowledge to keep your skills sharp? Are you a lifelong learner who enjoys the chance to keep expanding your knowledge? [LNCEU.com](http://LNCEU.com) gives you two online trainings every month to build your LNC

business. Look at the options at [LNCEU.com](http://LNCEU.com) and start right away in the comfort of your home.

Are you interested in building your LNC business by getting more clients, making more money and avoiding expensive mistakes? The [LNCAcademy.com](http://LNCAcademy.com) is the coaching program I offer to a select number of LNCs. You get my personal attention and mentorship so that you can excel and build a solid foundation for your LNC practice. Get all the details at [LNCAcademy.com](http://LNCAcademy.com).