

Infection Control TODAY® 30 Years

Beyond the Walls: Elevating Infection Prevention and Control Through Shared Knowledge

Expanding Professional Influence and Patient Safety Impact

Tori Whitacre Martonicz, MA
Lead Editor of *Infection Control Today*®
Orange County APIC | October 2026

The fix already exists.

It worked at your facility.

It lives in your head, your binder, your committee minutes.

It just hasn’t left your building yet.

Learning Objectives

- **Describe** at least 2 leadership strategies infection preventionists (IPs) can use to influence staff behavior and improve adherence with infection prevention protocols.
- **Apply** a structured communication framework (Problem–Action–Outcome) to improve clarity and effectiveness in written and verbal infection prevention messaging.
- **Identify** at least 2 best practices for developing and delivering effective presentations or posters that communicate infection prevention outcomes and impact.

Full Disclosure: I'm Not an IP or an SP Professional



MA in English Composition and Literature



Had never heard of IP or sterile processing



Editor and college instructor of writing and public speaking



Now studying for the a-IPC



Still learning IPC — but I know how to write and present

You’re Already Leading

Not giving orders and expecting instant adherence → Translating complex data into meaning → Driving adherence across departments → Influencing people who don’t report to you = **The hardest kind of leadership**

Your Influence Doesn’t Stop at the Walls

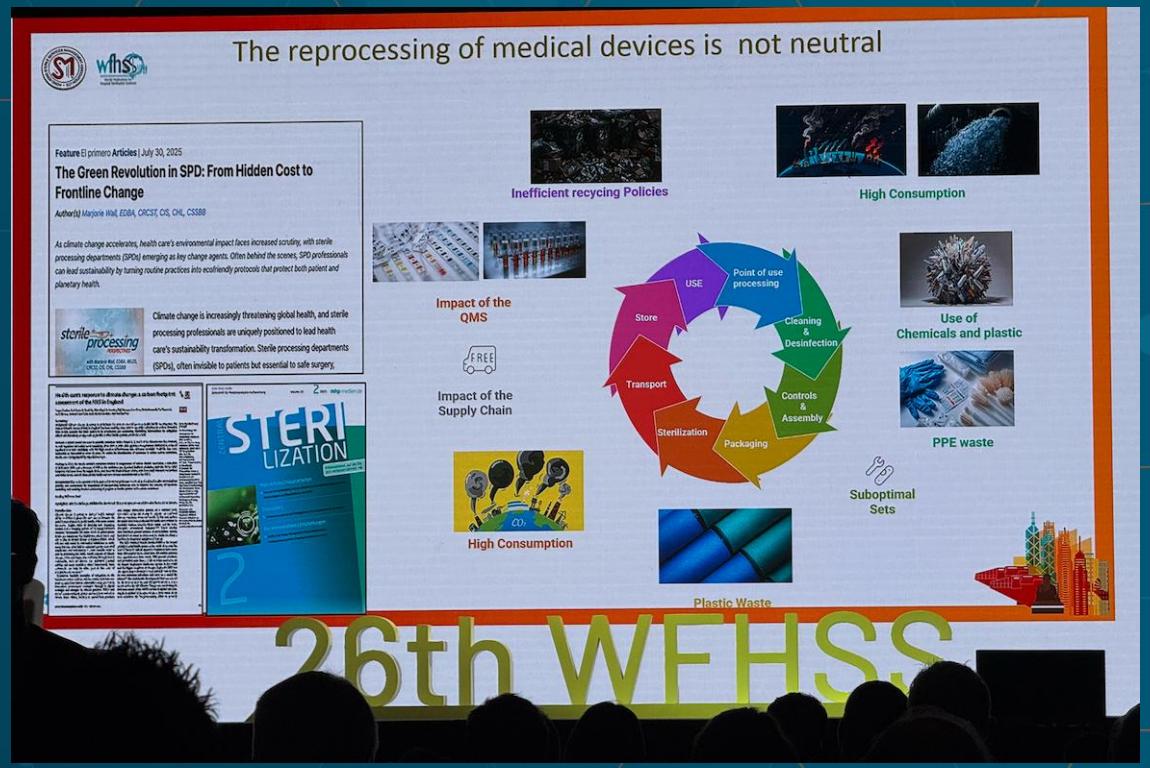
- You shape line care.
- You shape sterile technique in the OR.
- You shape protocol adherence.
- You shape how education lands.

It doesn’t need to stop there.

One Article. Thousands of Colleagues.

- Someone Googles the problem you already solved.
- They find your article.
- They implement your fix.
- An infection doesn't happen.
- Your words = experience, lessons, solutions, preventing infections, saving lives.
- Bonus: writing makes you a sharper, more confident expert.

You can save lives with something you wrote.



Problem → Action → Outcome



- Works for emails, reports, articles, posters, and presentations.
- For example:
  - Problem: Hand hygiene adherence on the surgical unit was 65%.
  - Action: Targeted education plus weekly audits with real-time feedback.
  - Outcome: 90% adherence within 90 days.
- Clear. Structured. Replicable.

“I Can’t Write.” Let’s Talk About That.

The Fear:

- “My writing isn’t good enough.”
- “Who am I to be published? I’m just an IP.”
- “What if people criticize me?”

The Truth:

- My job is polish. Your job is expertise.
- Every writer needs an editor.
- In 4 years: 3 critical comments. Only 2 required changes.
- Critique starts conversations. That’s the point.

Your title ≠ authority. Your experience = authority.

How to Write: It's Simpler Than You Think

Step 1: Find your story

- A protocol fix, a hard problem solved, a trend you've noticed.
- You don't need a perfect idea — just something to say.

Step 2: Talk it out

- Record yourself explaining it to a colleague. Transcribe it with Otter.ai.
- That transcript is your first draft.

Step 3: Send it to an editor

- Don't wait for permission — or "perfect."
- Worst case: "Here are some ideas." Likely: "Great — let me help."

Step 4: Revise and publish

- Editors help at every step.
- Your voice goes out. Your impact multiplies.

Purdue OWL

***Infection Control Today* will run a series on how to write articles, posters, and presentations.**

Where to Publish

Trade Publications:

- *Infection Control Today*, *OR Manager*, *Surgical Services Management*, HSPA's *PROCESS*
- Built for practitioners. Collaborative — no peer-review gauntlet.

Peer-Reviewed Journals:

- *American Journal of Infection Control*
- More rigorous, longer timeline. QI data is a great fit — and it's doable.

Start Where You're Comfortable

- Your own platform → trade publications → peer-reviewed journals.
- Build confidence. Then level up.

Your Own Platform:

- LinkedIn articles, blogs, newsletters
- No permission needed. The easiest place to start.

Public Speaking: Terrifying?

The Fear:

- “Everyone will be watching. I’ll forget what to say.”
- “I don’t have charisma.”
- "What if someone asks a question I can't answer?"

The Reality:

- You’ll have your notes.
- The audience wants you to succeed.
- Nerves mean you care. Use the energy.
- People remember real, not polished.

Be Authentic!

How to Present (Even If You Think You Can't)

Before: Practice out loud

- To your dog counts. (Meet my audience.)
- Nobody knows what you forgot — except you.

During: Let your passion show

- Slow down.
- Pause. Breathe. Silence is a gift to your audience.

After: Call it a win

- You succeeded the moment you stepped up.



Your Speaking Journey: Start Where You Are

Your Facility: Department meetings and committees. The safest room you'll ever speak in.

Your Chapter: APIC chapter meetings and grand rounds. Friendly, familiar faces.

Virtual & LinkedIn: Webinars and 1–2 minute videos. Get used to hearing your own voice.

National Stage: APIC, HSPA, AORN, IDWeek, SHEA. They're there to learn, not to judge.

Your Digital Platform: LinkedIn

- Share articles, insights, and career advice
- Where professionals live. Peers, administrators, IPC professionals.
- Consistency builds visibility: Regular posts position you as a thought leader.
- Post 1x/week → few months → reputation.
- Reputation opens doors—speaking, writing, consulting.
- Digital presence = professional brand.
- Even writing on others' posts gets you exposure.
- 1-2 minute videos until you feel comfortable. Nothing longer than 4 or 5 minutes.
- Reread before you hit send.

Don’t Take My Word for It

“As someone who is more introverted, I was conquering a fear, because to grow, you must do what makes you uncomfortable. So I did the uncomfortable thing… Though unexpected, I felt confident.”

“Every person in that room was there because they wanted to be.”

— Nicole Simon, CIS, CHL, CRCST, on presenting at HSPA 2026

Your First Step: Choose One Path

Writing Path

Pitch one article idea to *Infection Control Today* or a similar publication.

Speaking Path

Submit one speaking proposal or poster abstract — chapter, committee, or conference.

Digital Path

Write one thoughtful LinkedIn post this week.

All paths lead to leadership

Pick the one that excites you most—or scares you most (that's often the right one).

The Patient Who Never Knows Your Name

Imagine: You write up an HAI win.

- An IP 3 states away adopts it.

One year later: 15 HAIs prevented.

- Those patients go home.
- They never learn your name.



That's the ripple effect. That's your power. That's leadership.

You have a choice.

Stay where you are — or claim your voice.

Influence your facility — or your profession.

Leadership isn’t a title. It’s a choice.

The question isn’t whether you CAN lead beyond your walls.

The question is: WILL you?

Thank You! Questions?

CONTACT:

Tori Whitacre Martonicz, MA

Lead Editor, *Infection Control Today*

Email: tmartonicz@mjhlifesciences.com

Text: 330-606-9995 (text only)

QR Code for *Infection Control Today's* Author Guidelines