Guidelines for Creating Your Data Walk Poster

Thank you for choosing to present your poster during the **Data Walk** at our *Whole Health, Whole Community: Dialogues to Reduce Rural Health Disparities* symposium.

<u>**Remember:**</u> Unlike typical academic presentations, a Data Walk prioritizes **interactive and collaborative conversation**, community engagement, and collective exploration of data. Attendees will independently explore your poster, discuss them openly, and contribute their own insights and lived experiences.

Main Goal of Your Poster
Your poster should:
- **Engage attendees** in discussions about rural health disparities, mental health, trauma-informed care, and social determinants of health.
- **Empower attendees** by making the data clear, relatable, and interactive.
- Inspire participants to **share insights, experiences, brainstorm solutions, and generate actionable ideas** for future research and positive change in health and well-being.

Important Reminders Before You Begin
☑ Mandatory Review—Due Friday, May 2
- To ensure your poster aligns with symposium guidelines and expectations, submit your **near-final poster for review by Friday, May 2** to [**WholeHealth@vt.edu**](mailto:WholeHealth@vt.edu)
- Early submissions are encouraged to allow ample feedback integration time.

☑ Free Poster Design Consultations (Optional)
- **VT University Libraries** has generously offered their expertise to support your poster design.
- Schedule your personalized 30-Minute consultation to enhance your poster's clarity, visual appeal, and interactive elements.
- Contact dataservices@vt.edu (Mention the *Whole Health Consortium* along with Nathaniel Porter or Michael Stamper)

Important Considerations for Poster Content
- **Focus on Rural Virginia Context:**
  Your poster should clearly reflect data and insights specifically relevant to rural Virginia communities. Participants should easily recognize and relate to the local or regional challenges and opportunities.
- **Use Recent Data (Within the Last 5 Years):**
  Include recent data or findings collected within the past five years to keep discussions grounded in current realities and enable attendees to brainstorm timely, actionable solutions.

How to Create an Effective Data Walk Poster

1. Clearly Define Your Key Message

- Identify **one main insight or question** your poster is addressing.
- Ensure your key message is easy for everyone (community leaders, practitioners, researchers, policymakers, students) to quickly grasp.

Tip: Create a concise, memorable title that summarizes your main idea.
Example: "Why Do Rural Families Miss Health Appointments?"

---

2. Select and Present Data Keeping in Mind the Symposium is about Rural Virginia.

- Choose just **2–4 critical data points** that directly support or illustrate your main insight or message.
- Avoid exhaustive data presentations; instead, focus on data that provoke thoughtful discussion or reflection about community experiences and possible solutions.
- Where relevant, include comparisons (e.g., rural vs. national averages) to contextualize your findings.
- Please be sure to include recent data (i.e., within the last 5 years).

Tip: Clearly label charts or visuals with straightforward language—avoid jargon or technical terms.

---

3. Foster Dialogue with Strategic Questions

The Data Walk's strength lies in participants interpreting the data themselves. Clearly display 1–2 thoughtful, open-ended questions that guide participants toward meaningful conversation:

- *Examples:*
    - "What surprises you about these findings?"
    - "Does this data match your personal or community experience?"
    - "What community resources might help address these issues?"
    - "Who should be involved in addressing these challenges?"

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
VIRGINIA TECH.

WHOLE
HEALTH
CONSORTIUM
AT VIRGINIA TECH

4. Visual and Interactive Considerations

- **Poster Board Size:**
    - The poster board size is **4 feet high by 8 feet wide (48" x 96").**
    - You may use as much of this space as needed, but ensure your content is presented clearly and includes sufficient room for any interactive elements.
    - Recommendation dimensions are shown below.
    - You may also build your poster using standard 8.5" X 11" paper (printed in landscape orientation) arranged on this poster space.

- **Limit Text:**
    - Use short, easily readable sentences or bullet points.
- **Use Visuals Effectively:**
    - Employ simple, accessible visuals (charts, maps, icons, photos).
    - Provide visual context (e.g., photos from your community, simple icons symbolizing key points).
- **Interactive Elements:**
    - Clearly designate spaces for sticky notes/comments to invite direct participant feedback.
    - Include simple instructions (e.g., "Add your ideas here!" or "Share your thoughts").
    - Use QR codes if you want participants to access more information digitally.
- **Whitespace:**
    - Keep generous margins and spacing—avoid cluttering the display.

Tip: Participants should feel encouraged to add their reflections without obscuring your data or visuals—make sure there's plenty of open space.

5. Ensure Accessibility

- Use **large, easy-to-read fonts** (minimum 24 pt text, 36+ pt headings).
- High contrast colors enhance readability (e.g., black on white, dark blue on pale yellow).
- Ensure visuals are clear even to individuals with visual impairments.

Tip: Ask someone unfamiliar with your topic to review your poster briefly for clarity.

6. Sensitive & Respectful Data Presentation

- If presenting sensitive data (e.g., related to mental health or trauma), provide enough context to avoid misinterpretation or reinforcing negative stereotypes.
- Clearly state any limitations or contexts that may influence data interpretation, allowing participants to form balanced perspectives.

Tip: Balance challenging data with positive community strengths or achievements to promote a balanced, empowering conversation.

7. Final Checks and Test Print

- Proofread thoroughly for clarity and simplicity.
- Conduct a small-scale test print to evaluate visual balance and readability.

8. Poster Set-Up on the Day of the Data Walk

- Hang your poster at eye level (approximately 5 feet from the ground).
- Ensure the poster area is welcoming
- Provide interactive materials (brief handout, sticky notes, pens, markers).

Optional Facilitator Role During the Data Walk

If <u>you choose</u> to stand near your poster, your role is supportive rather than explanatory. Keep these principles in mind:

☑ DO:	✖ DON'T:
✓ Invite participant questions and reflections.	✗ Give lengthy explanations.
✓ Encourage sharing of lived experiences.	✗ Dominate the conversation.
✓ Support participants to interact with each other.	✗ Correct participants' interpretations.
✓ Clarify misunderstandings briefly.	✗ Lecture extensively.

Remember the Core Philosophy of the Data Walk

Your poster is a starting point—not an endpoint. It's a means to inspire conversation, gather community wisdom, and encourage collective problem-solving. The insights participants share during the Data Walk will enrich our collective understanding of health disparities in rural communities and drive more effective, community-engaged health research and solutions.

Thank you for helping us create this meaningful and collaborative experience!

If you have any questions about poster submission or review, please reach out directly to the symposium planning team: WholeHealth@vt.edu