

# SSWR 2025 Conference

## Flash Talk Video Transcript

**Fatima:**

Hello everyone, and welcome to our flash talks session at SSWR. My name is Fatima Mabrouk, and with my colleagues Kirk Foster and Justin Harty, from the SSWR Board of Directors. We are here to guide you through the flash talk format and its role for our conference.

A flash talk is a brief, focused presentation designed to deliver essential ideas concisely in just 8 minutes.

Each talk aims to simplify complex concepts, making them accessible to our diverse, interdisciplinary audience. By concentrating on the core aspects of research, background, methods, results, and conclusions – we ensure the presentation is impactful and digestible. Engaging visuals and clear communication are key, avoiding technical jargon to resonate with professionals from various fields. The flash talk format offers a dynamic alternative to traditional presentations fostering a vibrant exchange of scholarly ideas and enhancing academic discourse.

**Fatima:**

Its brevity allows its attendees to explore a wide range of topics quickly, sparking new ideas and interdisciplinary dialogue. Additionally, this format helps presenters develop skills for clear, succinct communication tailored to diverse audience.

Each session features 7 presentations, each lasting 8 minutes within a 90-minute timeframe. This structure maximizes efficiency and audience engagement showcasing a broad spectrum of research.

In summary, flash talks diversify presentation methods, increase engagement, and develop communication skills. Let's embrace this format and look forward to the exciting presentations ahead.

**Justin:**

Let's move on to a detailed discussion about what you can expect from the structure of your flash talk and some strategic ways to approach your presentation.

I want to begin by sharing what a SSWR flash talk session looks like. Each flash talk session is designed to last 90 minutes, allowing for high-impact and concise presentations. In each session, there will be seven presenters. Each presenter will have a brief window to share their research and insights, making every minute and point count.

Each session is led by a moderator. The moderator's role is crucial for keeping the session on track and ensuring that each presenter receives equal time to present. Following the presentations, there will be Q&A. This allows the audience to engage directly with presenters, asking questions and seeking further clarification on the topics discussed. Let's now explore details of each sessions format.

**Justin:**

Let's break down the typical structure of a fire succession and understand how each segment contributes to the overall effectiveness of your presentation. The session will begin with a brief introduction from the moderator. This sets the stage, introduces the presenters, and explains the session's topical theme. The core of the session is dedicated to the presentations.

With 63 minutes allocated, each of the seven presenters will have 8 minutes to deliver their talk, ensuring a concise, yet impactful presentation. Between each presentation, there will be about a minute transition. This is crucial for preparing the next speaker and maintaining a seamless flow throughout the session. After the presentations, a 20-minute Q&A session will follow. This is your opportunity to engage with the audience, clarifying any points and delve deeper into your research.

The session will conclude with closing remarks from the moderator. Summarizing the key points discussed and highlighting implications for social work research. Understanding this format will help you prepare effectively and ensure that your presentation fits smoothly into the session's flow. Now that we discussed the general sessions format, let's move on to what your presentation format will look like.

**Justin:**

As you prepare your flash talk, it's important to structure it effectively to ensure clarity and impact within the tight time constraints. Here's the format to guide your presentation. Start by setting the stage. So use the first 2 minutes to introduce the background of your research and clearly state its purpose. This helps engage the audience right from the beginning and provides context for what follows.

You may want to consider beginning your presentation with a conclusion that you've drawn or an interesting main finding. This approach grabs attention immediately by presenting the most impactful information first, setting a compelling context for the details that follow. You may also open with a hook that draws audiences in. This can be a surprising statistic, a provocative question, or a relatable scenario that highlights the relevance of your research.

Next, in about a minute or less, you'll outline your research methods. You'll want to keep this part concise and focus on the key methods that you've used without going into extensive detail. You want to avoid jargon and complex language. The goal is to communicate your methods as clearly and succinctly as possible, making their analysis accessible to all audience members regardless of their familiarity with the methods that you've used.

**Justin:**

Spend the next 2 minutes presenting your key findings. You want to highlight the most significant results that you want your audience to remember. To do this, you may want to use visuals that effectively complement your spoken words. A well-designed graph or a key image can make your results more memorable and help the audience visualize the findings you're discussing.

You'll want to conclude with implications of your findings. You'll want to spend about 3 minutes discussing what your results mean for the field, potential applications, and future research directions. A strong closing reinforces your main message and increases the likelihood of your research being remembered. Conclude your talk by reconnecting to the questions, interesting points, or a hook you introduced at the beginning of your talk to create a convincing narrative arc that reinforces the main message of your presentation.

This approach helps the audience recall initial intrigue, bringing your argument full circle, which enhances the impact and memorability of your talk.

This presentation format will help you deliver a concise and powerful flash talk that effectively communicates your research to an interested audience. I'll now hand it over to Kirk, who will outline the expectations for the presenters and the moderators.

**Kirk:**

Remember, this is a 5-to-8-minute talk, so it needs to be tight both in content and presentation. You'll have a maximum of three slides. Don't cram as much as possible onto each slide but think of these as a way to draw your audience into your talk. Use a quote, an image, but definitely not a regression table.

Your slides should not be full of text either. If your audience can read everything you're saying on your slide, then why even talk? That's one of the objectives of these flash talks. Sharpening the presenter's scientific communication skills to both professional and lay audiences. Your flash talk might take more advanced preparation than either an oral paper or poster.

**Kirk:**

Practice, practice, practice and practice again. Practicing in advance will ensure that you know what you want to say and how you want to say it. Your preparation will help you get your main points across to your audience, so you leave them with enough that they understand the study and its implications, but they also want to know more. Who doesn't want to leave others wanting, at least just a little?

Then you know, you have them hooked. Practicing will also help you establish your timing and internalize the cadence of your talk. You will not be permitted to go over time. The moderator will cut you off. It's important that you keep within your time limit as a consideration of others coming after you. The takeaway here is to come prepared.

We ask that you submit your slides to your moderator at least one week prior to the conference so they can come prepared too. And we also ask that you arrive on time for your presentation.

**Kirk:**

Moderators play a very important role in the flash talks sessions. If you're moderating, you have three main tasks. First, collect and organize presentations in advance. Second, keep the session on track and everyone on time. This includes cutting anyone off who exceeds their time. And third lead the Q&A session. We cannot stress enough how important it is for moderators to come to the session organized with a clear game plan.

The moderators should establish the order of the talks and have them loaded and open on their laptop prior to the start of the session. This will facilitate everyone staying on time and ensure a smooth one-minute transition between presenters. Moderators are tasked with keeping the pace and not letting anyone derail the session. Don't be shy about cutting off a presenter who has exceeded their time.

It's only being courteous to the subsequent presenters. Lastly, moderators will facilitate the question-and-answer session. This will last about 20 minutes. Please don't think about this as having a 20-minute cushion because it's not that at all. It's a time for the audience to dig deeper into the presentations. You might have to start things off and ensure that all presenters get at least one question.

Try your best to give everyone equal time.

**Kirk:**

This work conference committee recognizes this is a new format and that you didn't elect to give a flash talk this year but were assigned to the format. We appreciate your willingness to pilot and support our efforts to modernize the annual conference. We didn't create flash talks. Other societies are hosting them at their conferences already. That means we have some resources and examples to share, as you can see on the slide.

You can also find more through a simple Internet search. We encourage you to review some of these resources as you prepare your talk or as you prepare to moderate a session. Doing so will give you a more comprehensive understanding of the format and some very useful tips on conceptualizing your talk. Remember practice and be organized. Oh yeah. Have fun with it too! Thanks so much. We appreciate you taking on this important effort for the Society for Social Work and Research.