MODULE 6 – ENSURING CREDIBILITY
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As individuals and institutions construct behavioral health policy, they use institutional and social language shorthand that influences stakeholders across political, economic, and societal dimensions.

Remember in the lecture of epidemiology, how statistics are shorthanded to make them more easily recallable and more compelling? Then also take into consideration that we all have catch phrases and terms that bring with them much more than a phrase, but also perhaps an entire way of knowing and performing.

Since language is how we frame our understanding of an issue and how we present that issue to an audience or to stakeholders, we need to acknowledge any bias in the preparation of our policy briefs and presentations, as well as any biases that may be in our supporting literature.

So in addition to establishing credibility to our voice when we write, we need to also address how credible is our literature review. A well-crafted literature review is a thing of beauty, as well as thoughtful, thorough and well documented.

So here's some tips on getting started. A good literature review contains all or most of the major studies on your topic. It relies on appropriate primary sources. Secondary data or analysis is always a second choice. Find the original work.

A good literature review is well organized, with clearly developed ideas. It also includes a needs statement, to justify the need for new research, or the need or lack thereof for changes in clinical practice. It does not rely on a single source for data. It contains accurate and current statistics. It is to the point and understandable. If it is too complicated to explain, don't use it.

A good literature review checks the facts. It checks the facts again. It checks the citations. It checks the citations again. It has consistent definitions and arguments. It uses opposing viewpoints to gather the facts to substantiate your case. It concludes with a synopsis and implications for the field.

In addition, we suggest a literature review notebook. A sample literature notebook contains your research questions, concepts determined, databases searched, and search strategies, including the keywords or control vocabulary used, classification codes, filters, as well as how successful your search was as to the relevance, to keep you on track and to remember what you did to find what you found.

So minimally you should be able to keep in your notebook, what is my topic, and be as specific as possible. What are my keywords? What exactly do I want to explore? If the search flops, and searches inevitably do flop, do I have an alternative subject? What are its terms, et cetera?

Next, where do I need to go? Identify the sources I might use. And with multi-disciplinary research areas, they range from empirical research to legal statutes. So policy, you're all across the board. What resources shall I use? Well that will be what is more likely to get you the relevant, accurate, and current information on the topic.