

QUESTION

What is it like to chair the ONS Bridge™ Content Planning Team?

Gary Shelton, DNP, MSN, NP, ANP-BC, AOCNP®, is a nurse practitioner at Mount Sinai Health System in New York, NY. Shelton can be reached at gebsd@aol.com or gary.shelton@mountsinai.org, with copy to CJONEditor@ons.org. The author takes full responsibility for this content and did not receive honoraria or disclose any relevant financial relationships.

When I was invited to ponder over an opportunity to be chair of the 2022 Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Bridge™ Content Planning Team, my chronic impostor syndrome festered. Could I do it? And more importantly to me, would I enjoy it?

After having to cancel the 2020 ONS Congress®, ONS developed a “bridge” in the fall to provide a venue for offering oncology education so as to not miss out on learning—a bridge from one educational opportunity toward another. COVID-19 did not create virtual platforms such as online learning, blogs, or TED Talks, but it certainly provided the impetus to improve these outlets. With the initial success of the first ONS Bridge and because of an uncertain future for social gatherings ahead, the next conference was held virtually as 2021 ONS Bridge. With that success, ONS established the permanence of the virtual fall conference.

But again, could I do it? With colleagues from prior ONS Congress planning committees as my mentors and with guidance from the 2021 ONS Bridge Content Planning Team chair, I grew in confidence, agreeing to take the helm.

Interviewing oncology nurse volunteers for my team, I wanted to hear what brought them joy. As a transformational leader and the ONS Bridge Content Planning Team chair, I knew that I could help members of the team I would create to realize their own potential as new leaders. It was a difficult task to choose my four team members, but I picked perfectly.

All planning meetings were virtual, and volunteers committed to sharing their precious free time. Our ONS headquarters colleagues, who have put together great conferences for decades, were our guides and sounding boards. Those who had previous experience with conference development

were able to provide insight as we pondered what worked before, as well as what did not.

Determining the theme and deciding on important topics were the most energizing tasks. Having team members in various roles and from differing settings provided us with a sense that we had our fingers on the pulses of our oncology peers and colleagues.

Once topics were chosen, we began another fun process—choosing expert speakers. Of note, we needed to ensure that the information included was new and would be important to nurses, that speakers would commit to deadlines, and that they would listen to our suggestions and adhere to ONS standards.

For the third virtual ONS Bridge conference, ONS partnered with an outside vendor who listened and understood the needs of the virtual attendees. They created ways for attendees, presenters, and all of us to communicate in real time to feel as though we were almost together in person. This was most important to me; we need not be in the same room to feel a part of something bigger. The vendor promised to be there every step of the way once we were live. The virtual format made me nervous, and there was behind-the-scenes angst that was never known to attendees. The conference went without obvious glitches, and it was the most successful virtual conference to date. The 2023 ONS Bridge Content Planning Team has big shoes to fill, and I know they will improve on the theme. Good luck to the chosen chairs for the upcoming 2023 and 2024 ONS Bridge conferences.

Throughout my experience, I learned how self-doubt can be used to open our minds and that I am not an impostor. ONS relies on all of us to add to the knowledge of others through volunteerism. There is power and promise in being a volunteer; we all have our unique perspectives. I was most impressed with team building and teamwork. After all, no one works alone or succeeds alone. No one is ever all alone. Even the leader can be led.

KEYWORDS

ONS Bridge; oncology; education; leadership; virtual conference; volunteer

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RESOURCES

- **ONS Leadership Learning Library**
Provides education and tools for leadership in oncology nursing
<https://bit.ly/3HfjOLp>
- **Pauline Rose Clance**
Shares resources addressing impostor phenomenon, a common leadership barrier
<https://bit.ly/3HezVIW>
- **Volunteer Through ONS**
Offers ways to volunteer and share expertise
<https://bit.ly/3NfGgb5>