



## Tips for delegates: How to make the most from your WCPT Congress experience

The global physical therapy profession will come together in Geneva, Switzerland in May 2019. Many physical therapists self-fund to attend a WCPT congress, while others seek financial support from physical therapy professional organisations, hospitals, clinics, universities, research centres and employers.

Attending a WCPT Congress could change your physical therapy life and practice as well as you personally! For everyone this is a significant investment of time and financial resources and it is important that you get the most from this wonderful opportunity:

- learn about the profession around the world
- mix with leaders of the profession
- hear about the latest research from across the professional fields
- contribute to discussions on professional, education, research and clinical issues
- make new or refresh friendships
- gain valuable continuing education credits
- see a beautiful and interesting part of the world
- have fun whilst doing all of the above

The following tips will help build the case in support of funding/time and ensure you reflect on the goals of attending and outcomes achieved, assisting you to make the most out of your attendance,

### 1. Personal professional development

Identify your professional development goals and connect them to the learning opportunities at WCPT Congress 2019.

Think about your learning needs, professional direction and opportunities you want to explore. At the same time keep an open mind and be ready for the unexpected to be meaningful and valuable.

- Explore sessions and see how their objectives and content match with your needs.
- Prepare prior to the congress and select a few 'must attend' sessions, people you want to listen to and meet, and new things to challenge you. It is good to have an idea of things to focus on, but also good to be flexible.
- Engage with others through social media using the congress hashtag #WCPT2019

### 2. Organisational benefit

Think about how your organisation will benefit from your attendance.

- Submit an abstract to profile the work of your organisation.

- Plan ahead to think about what you can collate to share your learning with colleagues. For example, running an in-service training event on your return, hosting a Q&A with your colleagues, or sharing notes.
- If you are attending with colleagues plan together to cover different sessions and share what you learnt.
- Find out what the needs are of your service and/or facility. Come with current problems and look for solutions. Collaborations can arise that result in new solutions for your organisation by sharing and networking with your fellow delegates.
- Visit the Exhibition Hall to bring back contacts and information on products and services that can save you and your service valuable time and money.
- Create an action plan for post-congress to keep focused on outcomes and change.

### **3. Presenting the business case for attending**

Customise our sample justification letter which summarises how the conference will help you advance your professional development, make valuable networking connections and in turn improve your organisation. Break down the specific costs and outline the anticipated return on investment.

### **4. At congress**

Make sure you have:

- The Congress App downloaded to a mobile device.
- Your objectives and action plan.
- A charger for your mobile device and suitable adapter.
- Your business cards – good for making connections and supporting networking.

Make sure you are prepared for long days:

- Venues are usually air-conditioned which can make them a bit chilly.
- Bring a water bottle that can be refilled onsite.
- Wear comfortable shoes and keep what you are carrying to a minimum.

### **5. Recommended**

- If you are a full congress delegate go to the opening ceremony and welcome reception. This is where you will be inspired and make first contact with friends from across the world and, in particular, get the flavour of the host organisation.
- Go to your friends' talks - they appreciate the support.
- Go to the poster sessions. They are of equal standing to platform presentations and you have more time to talk to the presenters.
- Go into a random session that you know nothing about – they can open your mind to new ideas and opportunities.
- Explore a range of session formats to find out which appeal most to you.
- Join the discussions at networking sessions, discussion sessions and Indaba sessions where there will be a lot of interaction
- Don't be afraid to approach someone you might consider an important name in physical therapy! Everyone started somewhere and will be pleased to talk with you.
- If you see someone standing on their own and you are also alone, introduce yourself and explore what brought you to congress.

And remember: have fun and enjoy yourself.