

Brianne LaPelusa

WRITING & EDITORIAL | COMMUNICATIONS | KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

Chicago, IL | brilapelusa@gmail.com | brilapelusa.wixsite.com/brilapelusa

PROFILE

Writer, communications strategist and research translator with an MFA in Nonfiction Writing and experience spanning nonprofit and science communications, editorial development, research and public-facing education. Skilled in transforming complex research, policy and community issues into accessible stories, publications, educational resources and digital content. Brings a multidisciplinary approach combining writing, editorial strategy, creative communication and research, with interests in animal welfare, biodiversity, conservation and sustainability.

COMMUNICATIONS & EDITORIAL SKILLS

Writing & Editing · Editorial Strategy · Science Communication · Knowledge Translation · Research & Fact-Checking · Content Development · Creative Strategy · Visual Storytelling · Curriculum Development · Project Management

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health, The University of Texas at Austin

Senior Administrative Program Coordinator | 2023–2026 | Remote

- Led writing, editing and creative development of public-facing reports, toolkits, educational resources and communications materials supporting state and national initiatives.
- Translated complex research and subject-matter expertise into clear, accessible content for practitioners, policymakers and community audiences.
- Collaborated with subject-matter experts, designers, consultants and community stakeholders to develop accurate, audience-centered materials.
- Managed multiple content projects through research, drafting, review and publication while coordinating deadlines and deliverables.
- Led development of multi-partner grant proposals totaling more than \$5 million, contributing to over \$1.5 million in awarded funding.
- Planned, developed and facilitated workforce trainings, creating more than 40 hours of original curriculum.

The Chicago Youth Innovation Hub

Community Engagement & Training Manager | 2025–2026 | Hybrid

- Led development of the annual impact report, translating program outcomes into accessible public-facing content.
- Developed communications and outreach materials supporting cross-sector collaboration and program implementation.
- Planned and coordinated conferences, workforce trainings and learning events serving more than 350 city staff, leadership and community partners.
- Managed community engagement initiatives in partnership with municipal agencies and community organizations.

Portland State University

Research Project Manager & Research Coordinator | 2021–2024 | Remote

- Researched, synthesized and translated findings into practical implementation guides,

educational resources and public-facing content.

- Developed training curricula and written resources supporting practitioners nationwide.
- Coordinated content development across partner organizations while managing multiple deadlines and deliverables.
- Managed multi-site workforce development and research initiatives from planning through implementation and evaluation.

Thresholds

Research & Innovation Coordinator / Specialist | 2021–2023 | Hybrid

- Developed reports, implementation resources and communications supporting organizational decision-making.
- Synthesized qualitative and program information into clear written products for internal and external audiences.
- Collaborated across departments on organizational learning and resource development.

Ensemble Media, Inc.

Marketing & Communications Specialist | 2018 | Onsite

- Researched, wrote and edited public-facing communications, educational resources and reports for nonprofit, healthcare, government and international development clients.
- Provided editorial oversight and fact-checking to improve clarity, accessibility and consistency across publications.

The Kennedy Forum Illinois

Communications Associate | 2017–2018 | Hybrid

- Researched and produced daily newsletter and digital content for campaigns reaching a 20,000+ subscriber audience.
- Developed communications and promotional content supporting major advocacy events reaching thousands of attendees.

Columbia College Chicago

Graduate Student Instructor | 2014–2017 | Onsite

- Designed curriculum and taught undergraduate courses in writing, rhetoric, media literacy.
- Evaluated student learning while fostering critical thinking and communication skills.

EARLIER EDITORIAL & WRITING EXPERIENCE

Hotel Amerika — Assistant Editor

Earthwords Literary Magazine — Editor

bpHope — Writer & Contributor

Dollfeeder Magazine — Editor & Co-Founder

UR Chicago — Staff Writer

The Daily Iowan — Arts & Culture Reporter

EDUCATION

MFA, Nonfiction Writing | Columbia College Chicago, 2017

BA, English & Creative Writing | The University of Iowa, 2013

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS & PROJECTS

Selected peer-reviewed publications, reports, toolkits and educational resources demonstrating expertise in writing, editorial development, communications, research and knowledge

translation. Additional work samples and project case studies are available in my [online portfolio](#).

Peer-Reviewed Publications

LaPelusa, B., Klodnick, V. V., Johnson, R. P., et al. (2026). Developing a substance use practice approach for peer support specialists in early psychosis coordinated specialty care. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*. [View publication](#)

Klodnick, V. V., **LaPelusa, B.**, Reznik, S. J., et al. (2024). Substance use approaches among peer support specialists in community mental health early psychosis programs. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*. [View publication](#)

Walker, J., Klodnick, V. V., **LaPelusa, B.**, et al. (2024). A theory of change for one-on-one peer support for older adolescents and young adults. *Children and Youth Services Review*. [View publication](#)

Klodnick, V. V., et al. (including **LaPelusa, B.**). (2024). Relational complexity of the near-age peer support provider role in youth and young adult community mental health settings. *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*. [View publication](#)

Book Chapter

Klodnick, V., **LaPelusa, B.**, Johnson, R. P., et al. (2025). Youth and young adult shared decision making. In *Shared Decision Making and Serious Mental Illness*. American Psychological Association. [View book](#)

Reports, Toolkits & Professional Writing

LaPelusa, B., et al. (2026). *Skills for Expanding Expertise in Peer Support (SEEPS): Training Curriculum and Facilitation Materials*. Portland State University. [View case study](#)

LaPelusa, B., Klodnick, V. V., Hawthorne, S., & Johnson, R. (2025). *Power in Partnership: 2025 Summer Youth Impact Report*. City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, Chicago Youth Innovation Hub & University of Texas at Austin. [View report](#)

Klodnick, V. V., Cohen, D., Johnson, R. P., **LaPelusa, B.**, et al. (2025). *Supported employment to foster recovery: General trends, financing, and the "Great Transformation" for transition-aged-youth supported employment*. SAMHSA & NASMHPD.

LaPelusa, B. (2023). *Peer Approaches to Substance Use for Early Psychosis Programs (PAS-EPP) Toolkit*. EPINET, Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health.

Barba, A., Klodnick, V. V., Munson, M. R., **LaPelusa, B.**, & Johnson, R. P. (2022). *Bridging the Gap Peer Kit for Agencies Employing Young Adults in Peer Roles*. Jewish Board of New York. [View toolkit](#)

Presentations & Trainings

LaPelusa, B., & Klodnick, V. V. (2025, July). *The role of peer specialists in early serious mental illness programs*. SAMHSA Early Serious Mental Illness Webinar.

LaPelusa, B., & Johnson, R. (2025, March). *Evaluating and refining Skills for Expanding Expertise in Peer Support (SEEPS)*. International Association of Youth Mental Health Conference, Vancouver, Canada.

LaPelusa, B. (2025, October). *How to effectively talk about substance use with youth*. City of Chicago DFSS Delegate Agency Staff Conference, University of Illinois Chicago.