



NESHCo 2026: The Craft of Connection

Vermont is a state celebrated for its artisanal traditions, intentional craftsmanship, and strong sense of community. “The Craft of Connection” draws from that heritage to highlight the care, precision, and thoughtfulness required in effective healthcare communication. Today, those qualities matter more than ever. In an era of shrinking budgets, leaner teams, and growing expectations, healthcare communicators are being asked to do more with what they have — relying on ingenuity, empathy, and collaboration to create lasting impact.

Every message, like a finely crafted object, should be designed deliberately, built to last, and meaningful for its audience. This theme emphasizes purposeful, human-centered strategies and invites us to explore how to design with intention, communicate with clarity, and sustain the craft of connection across people, platforms, and generations.

CONFERENCE TRACKS

1. Connecting with Patients & Communities

Track Description:

The most enduring healthcare connections are built on trust, empathy, and authenticity — not big budgets. From crafting stories that clarify complex topics to finding low-cost, high-impact outreach strategies, participants will learn about intentional, resourceful strategies to strengthen community bonds.

Sample Sessions:

- *Human-Centered Storytelling on a Shoestring Budget: Discover how to elevate your storytelling through empathy, local voices, and creative formats that resonate, even with limited resources.*
- *Building Trust Through Simplicity: Learn how clear, compassionate messaging and design cut through clutter and foster genuine connection.*
- *Small Team, Big Impact: Case studies of smaller, regional or rural healthcare teams making outsized community impact with ingenuity, partnerships, and grit.*
- *Crafting Equity: Explore practical ways to weave inclusion, accessibility, and cultural understanding into every communication touchpoint.*



2. Connecting Across Teams & Silos

Track Description:

Behind every strong external message is an internal network of aligned, motivated people. This track focuses on how communicators can bridge departments, break down silos, and build a shared sense of purpose — especially when teams are stretched thin. Learn practical methods for improving collaboration, increasing efficiency, and encouraging a culture where everyone feels and is part of the story you're telling.

Sample Sessions:

- *Bridging Marketing, HR, Clinical, and Operations: Tools and tactics for aligning cross-functional teams behind shared goals and consistent messaging.*
- *The Craft of Listening: Explore how intentional listening and empathy create stronger teams and a healthier organizational culture.*
- *Doing More with Fewer Hands: Tips for systematizing your workflows, leveraging templates, and using technology to scale your impact without burnout.*
- *Culture as Craft: Build a communication culture rooted in trust, collaboration, and adaptability — one message at a time.*

3. Connecting with Purpose

Track Description:

With growing demands and fewer resources, communicating with purpose has never been more important. This track explores aligning projects, campaigns, and messages in a way that feels authentically mission driven. Participants will learn how to prioritize what truly matters, measure meaningful impact, and sustain a sense of purpose in a world that can tend to reward speed over thoughtfulness.

Sample Sessions:

- *Intentional Strategy: How to focus limited resources on the highest-value initiatives and build clarity into every communication plan.*
- *The Mindful Marketer: Techniques for balancing creativity, strategy, and self-care in an increasingly fast-paced environment.*
- *Craft as Care: Explore how empathy and authenticity can turn everyday communications into acts of care and connection.*
- *Mission-Focused Metrics: Learn how to define and measure success in ways that reflect both outcomes and impact — not just volume.*



4. Connecting Through Innovation

Track Description:

Innovation isn't about having more tools. It's about using the right tools with creativity and care. This track examines how to bring craftsmanship into the digital era, using technology as a partner to extend, not replace, human connection. From practical AI applications to scrappy content strategies and automation hacks, discover how to make modern tools work harder for you and your audiences.

Sample Sessions:

- *AI as an Apprentice: Explore how to use AI to save time, generate ideas, and increase capacity while keeping messages authentically human.*
- *The Resourceful Creator: Learn how to repurpose content across channels to expand reach without multiplying effort.*
- *Digital Craftsmanship: Techniques for designing online experiences that feel personal and build lasting trust.*
- *Scrappy + Smart: Hear from peers who are innovating on tight budgets — using creativity, community, and courage to make more with less.*