

Ten Tips for Effective Science Communication

How to effectively communicate about complex scientific topics with the general public

Adapted from Aimee Pugh Bernard, PhD



1. Know Your Audience



Scientists? Non-scientists? Teachers? Parents? Kids? Doctors? Patients? Are they concerned about the topic? Satisfied? Unhappy? Angry?

2. Identify Goals



Is the goal to...Raise awareness? Build trust? Educate? Advocate? Influence policy? Encourage change? Answer questions?

3. Start With the Most Important Information



Start with the take-home message and/or key findings first! Answer the “Why should I care” or “What’s in it for me?” followed by the supporting science.

4. Avoid Jargon



Communicate using easy-to-understand language. Explore multiple explanations until you find the words that work best for the most people.

5. Be Relateable and Empathetic



Use analogies or stories to make science accessible and personal. Put yourself in the shoes of the person/people you are talking to.

Analogy: Vaccines are like seatbelts. They may not prevent a crash but they prevent serious injury and death.

Empathetic Statement: I can understand why you have questions about vaccines. You want to make the best decisions for you and your family. You want to make sure you understand the risks and benefits before vaccinating.

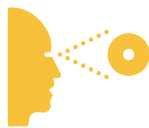
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6. Provide Visuals



Visuals are engaging and can help people understand, learn, and focus.

7. Stick to 3 Main Points



What three (3) things do you want your audience to remember?

- Vaccines may not prevent the "crash"
- Vaccines prevent serious injury
- Vaccines prevent death

8. Talk About the Scientific Process



Science is always evolving as we make new discoveries and learn from them.

"The only thing that is constant is change." - Heraclitus

9. Focus on the Big Picture



What's the impact on health, education, policy, finances?

Talking Point: Vaccine-preventable diseases can not only lead to illness but also high hospital bills and time away from school or work. Vaccines prevent this!

10. Develop an "Elevator Pitch"



Create a one minute overview of your message. What is it that you could say to someone in a very short amount of time that would effectively communicate your message?

It's important to practice this - it's harder than it sounds!

Want more in-depth information on science communication?

View our Education Series webinar with Dr. Bernard at bit.ly/ICTenTips.