

CONSORTIUM FOR PUBLIC OUTREACH ON ANIMAL RESEARCH

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Science Communication – How to talk about your research A few tips & tricks

Talking about research involving animals to the public can be a demanding task. To become more comfortable with it, there are a few things you as a scientist can do:

- Improve your communication skills

As a scientist we are taught how to talk to peers, but not necessarily how to communicate our science to people from outside science. However, it becomes increasingly more important for scientists to be able to do so (not just in research areas where your work involves animals). Hence, it is advisable to take part in workshops, which teach the basics of scientific outreach (such as communication or rhetoric workshops). There are many science communication groups active in the internet, look at their websites and social media accounts to get an idea how they explain difficult topics. But most importantly you need to practice your skills. A good start is to talk to non-science friends and family members about your work.

- Improve your knowledge

When communicating your research it is of vital importance to know the facts. In order to convincingly speak up, you have to be and appear competent. Get informed about animal research at your institute (policies, guidelines, numbers), as well as in your country. Get informed about critical issues, arguments and counter arguments.

- Outreach at your workplace

Animal research is a sensitive and even tough topic and it helps to know you can reach out to colleagues for support. Talk to your colleagues, co-workers and PIs about the topic. Together you can identify particular issues specific to your workplace and can come up with solutions to change it. Other sources for support at the institution you work at can be the dean, the head of department, the press office, graduate school or other authorities. Contact them to ask them about their outreach policies concerning animal research and if they have events/projects you can get involved with.

- Outreach outside your workplace

There are many ways to get involved into outreach outside your workplace. One possible way is via an NGO. Contact them to see if they have events/projects you can get involved with (e.g. doing background research for a website). Another easy way to get involved is via social media or in general on the internet. You can support websites which discuss animal research and share their content. Or you can engage in discussions on different platforms (Twitter, Reddit etc), in message boards on News Outlets or give feedback on Wikipedia pages concerning animal research.