COMMUNITY
DIALOGUE GUIDE

A Resource for Researchers to Better
Communicate and Improve their Science

Issued by The Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence (CHECoE)
at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey. Last updated January 2023.

For questions and additional information, please contact the Community Outreach and Engagement team at *outreach@CINJ.rutgers.edu.*

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Guide Overview

Dear Researcher,

The Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence (CHECoE) at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey (RCINJ) faciliates and supports mission critical Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) activities to address Catchment Area (CA) cancer burden and community needs. This guide has been prepared to help support you you and other researchers to engage in leading purposeful and meaningful conversations about your science with community members in our CA, which in this context is the entire state of New Jersey. The Guide has been designed to be a resource to help facilitate bi-directional conversations and engagements between you the researcher and community members to help inform your research through community input.

The guide has been divided into three sections to help you through this process:

1. **Section One (COE Background)**
   Provide an overview of COE and how CHECoE can help researchers facilitate bi-directional conversations and develop successful engagement with the community for their research.
2. **Section Two (Techniques, Suggestions, & Strategies):**
   Provides techniques and specific suggestions for engaging in COE facilitated bi-directional discussions.
3. **Section Three (Tools, Templates, and Resources):**
   Provides templates and additional resources.

We hope this is a valuable resource and we look forward to helping you collaborate with community members to improve your research.

Thank you!

Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence (CHECoE) Team

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ONE

Background Information

RUTGERS
Cancer Institute
of New Jersey
RUTGERS HEALTH

Community Outreach and Engagement

NCI
Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center

Overview of NCI Community Outreach and Engagement Requirements

Per the National Cancer Institute (NCI), Cancer Center's occupy a unique and important role in their communities. They are expected to perform research of relevance and engage the populations within their catchment area in the research they conduct. To accomplish this, Centers thoroughly analyze the demographics and cancer burden of their catchment area (CA). In addition, Centers are expected to engage communities within their catchment area to decrease their cancer burden, particularly among minority and underrepresented populations. To facilitate these community outreach and engagement (COE) activities, Centers establish community advisory board(s) and partnerships with other healthcare delivery systems and state and community agencies and coalitions for dissemination of evidence-based findings.

Community outreach and engagement plays a vital role in advancing a Centers' mission of reducing the cancer burden in its CA through continuous engagement with local communities and partnerships with local and state healthcare provider agencies, public health agencies, and community organizations. COE increases awareness of cancer and expands access to cancer prevention, screenings, treatment, research, and survivorship services to improve cancer outcomes. This is successfully achieved through continued engagement with community members and partners, working together to coordinate community outreach events, host professional and community-based educational workshops, and share resources and best practices with the goal of advancing and increasing cancer health equity.

COE is officially part of your role as a Cancer Center researcher, regardless of where you work in the research continuum, and the CHECoE team is here to help you meet the goals NCI has set for the benefit of the population we serve in our communities.

What do you need to do?

When working with community stakeholders, you should identify community needs, align your research program with those needs, and conduct research that is especially relevant to our catchment area population (New Jersey).

- Your research program is required to conduct and report on research projects where outreach to and engagement with communities informed and resulted in high-impact science.
- You are also required to work with communities to disseminate and implement evidence-based interventions (EBIs) and guidelines, public education, and public health policy recommendations.

What's in it for you?

Engaging communities in your research, especially when identifying research questions, designing and implementing the study or intervention, recruiting study participants, and interpreting findings, leads you to producing better science through:

- More relevant research questions
- Greater recruitment success
- Increased external validity
- Greater retention of participants
- Enhanced understanding of findings

Overview: How The Rutgers Cancer Institute's CHECoE Team Can Help You

The Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence (CHECoE) team is dedicated to improving the lives of the diverse, underserved populations that reside in our catchment area, which is the state of New Jersey; and advancing cancer health equity across the state by collaborating with our community partners, Community Cancer Action Board (CCAB), and Community Scientists to uphold our mission.

We're here to help you engage with communities in New Jersey as required by NCI. We help researchers like you effectively communicate with lay audiences and facilitate community discussions on how your research can address community needs or concerns while also enhancing the science behind your research. The purpose of this Community Researcher Guide and our team's researcher support services is to:

- Facilitate community-researcher to help inform your research and provide feedback about how your research can better serve New Jerseyans.
- Assist researchers in soliciting insight and feedback from community members who are relevant to your research to produce better, stronger, and more impactful science.
- Assist researchers in soliciting insight and feedback from community members who are relevant to your research to produce better, stronger, and more impactful science.

In doing so, COE would like to know what impact it has on your research. We offer confidential and personalized and feedback from our team, Community Scientists, and community partners to help researchers develop comfort and confidence while engaging in community-researcher dialogue. If you are interested in services, you can complete a Research Support Request Form directly on our website.

Interested in collaborating with the CHECoE team more generally? Visit our website to request community and professional education programs on a variety of cancer prevention and screening topics, to download educational materials and handouts, to see the calendar of upcoming events, and to learn more about partnership opportunities.

Process for Engaging Community Members with Support from COE:

1. Review this Community Research Guide

2. Have a one-on-one needs assessment discussion with with our Medical Education Specialist to determine what approach will work best with the research you are planning or conducting

3. Use the template PowerPoint presentation to prepare a draft of your community presentations.

4. Preview your presentation and COE plan with our team for review and supportive feedback. Confidential, private, and personalized.

5. Schedule and conduct your community engaged presentation/ feedback session with the audiences that will provide relevant input and support.

6.Document how your COE session went for NCI reporting. Was there impact for your research? What worked well? What other resources or support do you need?

Introduction to CHECoE Community Informed Opportunities and Services

The CHECoE team offers several bi-directional community engagement mechanisms to participate in dialogue with community members. The section outlines these opportunities as well as additional activities to engage with other researchers and beyond.

Acronyms	
RCINJ	Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
CHEoE	Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence
CCSG	Cancer Center Support Grants
COE	Community Outreach and Engagement
CCAB	Community Cancer Action Board
CA	Catchment Area
CS	Community Scientist

COMMUNITY SCIENTIST

Virtual Chat on Tap

KEY POINTS:

- This program aims to foster bidirectional communication by training individuals to collaborate with CINJ researchers and inform their respective communities of the research being conducted.
- Ensures our research is reflective of the needs of the communities that we serve
- Community Scientist graduates are available to advise researchers on myriad aspects of their research and offer suggestions to improve their research

1. Community Scientist Training Program and Community Scientists

The Community Scientist Training Program connects community members, regardless of their background or level of expertise in science and research, with scientists and researchers. In this 9-week training program, participants learn all the essentials of the cancer research process including topics like research ethics, the basics of research and the research process, clinical trials, cancer 101, cultural competency, informed consent, and social determinants of health. The material is tailored to give community members a strong foundation of the cancer research process, so they are better able to communicate and collaborate with researchers and disseminate information back to their respectivecommunities.

How can Community Scientists help your research?

Community Scientists have vast experience engaging with researchers and have served in various roles while collaborating with researchers, including:

- Advising researchers on different aspects of their research, including grant proposal input, grant application review, and evaluating outcomes measures
- Providing feedback on research questions to ensure they align with community needs
- Reviewing research protocols and giving feedback on protocol language to ensure the research approach and purpose makes sense and is clearly communicated
- Assisting researchers with recruitment efforts, providing feedback on recruitment plans, and advising on dissemination plans
- Serving on the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey's Scientific Review Board
- Providing feedback for researchers during Community Science Cafés.

2. Community Science Cafés

The Community Science Cafés allow researchers to engage in bi-directional, conversations with community members to review specific aspects of research projects (e.g., a recruitment plan, an evaluation plan, a tool to be disseminated, a form to be used, a research question to be investigated, etc.) and get advice on how to improve or adjust those materials and approaches.The goal is to facilitate opportunities for tangible, impactful feedback for you, the researcher, to take back and implement in your work.

Our Science Cafés typically have upwards of 40 participants including Community Scientists, CCAB members, community partners, and internal staff. They are held via Zoom, and Community Scientists document their feedback and suggestions during and after the presentation which are then shared with you, the researcher.

SCIENCE
CAFÉ

KEY POINTS:

- Excellent opportunity to provide an overview of your work and to engage in conversations with the focused group of community members based on your research topic, while ensuring the communities that we serve are informed and aware of the research being conducted.
- Researchers often share current and future research grant submissions and projects.
- Prepare a short overview of your work in laymen terms (15-20 minutes) and pose a few questions to community members to initiate discussion (30-40 minutes). For example template, see Researcher Community Guide Resources" and hyperlink 'Researcher Community Guide Resources' to this link: https://rutgers.box.com/s/zjizpa7uzlc3838mh7t67hsrqm79ev6n
- These meetings occur based on availability.

COMMUNITY CANCER ACTION BOARD

3. Community Cancer Action Board

The Community Cancer Action Board (CCAB) builds and fosterspartnerships between cancer researchers and community outreach staff and New Jersey communities. The CCAB provides input from community thought leaders and patient advocates to ensure community outreach and engagement, and research activities promote health equity, strengthen local capacity, and are responsive to community needs.

The CCAB helps to build trust and mutual understanding between researchers and the communities we serve, ensuring that values, customs, and cultural differences among persons and communities are respected. Members of our CCAB include educators, non-profit founders, and program managers. Some members are cancer survivors and patient advocates, but the members all work together to advance cancer health equity and reduce cancer health disparities and the overall cancer burden on New Jerseyans.

Upon utilizing various CHECoE community forums, please be prepared to think about how your work has been impacted by these discussions, as we will be following up to track this information. CCSG program members are expected to take advantage of these opportunities and provide specific examples of how your research benefited from community outreach through CCAB, Science Café's, Impact Councils, focus groups with community members, etc.

KEY POINTS:

- Excellent opportunity to provide an overview of your work and to engage in conversations with the community members from the CCAB.
- Researchers often prepare short overview of your work in laymen terms (10-15 minutes) and pose a few questions to CCAB to initiate discussion (10-15 minutes minutes). Note, see templates.
- These meetings occur quarterly throughout the year.

Questions to consider when thinking about the impact of community engagement:

- Did the feedback take your research into a different direction?
- Did you gain insight into strategies to help promote your research (enrollment, dissemination, etc.)
- Did engagement expand your reach to other communities and other populations?
- Did you improve study materials?
- Can you describe specific examples of how community members benefited from learning about your research?
- Invited to community meetings?
- Invited to share materials with other community groups?

CCAB Impact Councils

CCAB Impact Councils serve as internal CCAB committees that focus on specific cancer health equity topics. Impact councils meet monthly and are tasked with sharing their ideas regarding outreach, education, and program implementation related to their focus topic.. Each impact council is co-led by one internal staff member and one CCAB member. These groups work together to bring their visions to life, and COE staff help support these initiatives by providing the resources needed to conduct these activities.

CCAB IMPACT COUNCILS

CURRENTLY ACTIVE

1. Media and Arts
2. Community Scientist
3. Screening Implementation
4. Black Community Cancer Health Disparities

IN DEVELOPMENT

5. LGBTQ+
6. Latino
7. Asian/Pacific Islander I
8. Environmental Justice

4. Catchment Area and COE Research Program Integration Meeting

The CHECoE holds quarterly Catchment Area and COE Research Program Integration' meetings where CCSG Program Leaders describe research in their respective program that addresses the CA priorities and bidirectional community engagement. These meetings focus on current research efforts and possible future directions, followed by open discussion. Meetings include COE Program Liaisons from the five CCSG research programs and are open to the community (CCAB members and Community Scientist graduates) and all faculty and staff.

5. Works in Progress Meetings

The CHECoE team helps researchers connect with other researchers in the Rutgers community on topics relevant to cancer health disparities through Works in Progress (WIP) meetings. A WIP meeting is a forum where faculty can talk with other scientists about their research ideas, designs, how to engage the community for input, and get feedback in an informal setting.

Research can be presented at all stages: starting a project, planning the design, analyzing the data, or preparing for a grant submission. The objective is to set a reasonable agenda with plenty of time to ask focused questions to elicit feedback and discussion. Below are two areas researchers typically use this opportunity to obtain feedback from their fellow researchers.

Feedback Opportunities at Works in Progress Meetings

Starting a research project

- Present what's been done
- Identify the gap(s) in the literature
- Focus on 1-2 issues/dilemmas, for example:
    - Present/refine your conceptual framework
    - Identify possible research questions/hypotheses
    - Discuss pros/cons of research methodologies
    - Identify potential datasets
    - Solicit ideas on mentors/collaborators/ funding sources and ideas on when and how to engage with community members.

Research design or data analysis

- Briefly present what's been done as it affects your design
- Identify your specific aim(s) and hypotheses
- Present your research design
- Focus on 1-2 issues / dilemmas – for example:

Research design:

- Are these appropriate inclusion / exclusion criteria?
- How can I improve recruitment?
- Please pilot my questionnaire.
- How can I get my protocol through the IRB?
- How can I collect data on other variables in my conceptual framework?

Data analysis:

- Do the variables in my model make sense?
- Here's an interesting finding – what do you think of my conclusions?
- Are there other confounders I haven't considered?

KEY POINTS:

- A natural conversation between cancer researchers to share ideas and receive feedback on aspects of current and future research initiatives
- Offers an opportunity to collect unique insights for many different stages of a research project
- Peer reviewed projects are presented at this forum at least one month before the submission date

SECTION TWO

Techniques, Suggestions, & Strategies

Effectively Communicating Your Science

This Community Dialogue Guide is a resource for you and other RCINJ investigators to engage with community members about your research.

Effectively Communicating Your Science

When presenting research to an audience of individuals that may not have a scientific background or expertise in research, there are several things to consider to ensure the audience can understand what is being said and what the research entails. Catering the presentation to a lay audience ensures that those listening are better able to absorb, understand, and conceptualize the information. When audience members are well-informed, they are better equipped to engage in dialogue and provide feedback from a community perspective. This guide breaks down key aspects of presenting research to lay community members and provides insight into changes that researchers can make to better articulate this information and obtain valuable community feedback.

New Jerseyans deserve clear communications from researchers and medical professionals. Please review this advice on clear communication; we hope you find this document useful and that it helps you improve your communications so that the people you communicate with can learn what they need, understand what they learn, and use what they learn to meet their needs.

The tips in this guide are effective for any form of communication, but they are most relevant to presentations and written information regarding research. Our goal is to provide you with the tools and strategies necessary to communicate effectively with your audience by sharing actionable, understandable information and receiving actionable, relevant information that improves your research.

This section covers how to:

Set goals for community engagement and knowing why obtaining community feedback is important for improving your research

- Define your audience and determine what communities to engage with
- Organize your information to effectively deliver information
- Communicate technical information regarding your research:
    - Tips for communicating information clearly
    - Avoiding unnecessarily complicated language
    - Appropriate use of acronyms and abbreviations
    - Guidance for using visuals, diagrams, and graphics while presenting research
    - The PICO Model
- Access our PowerPoint template and additional resources
- Improve your communications by using the Cancer Health Equity Vocabulary Guide

KEY POINTS:

- Know the reasons why you are engaging community members. Come prepared.
- Catering your presentation to your audience will ensure the feedback received is relevant to your needs and you will ultimately benefit from the opportunity to engage with community members.
- Stay away from simply summarizing the research being done and asking what the audience thinks of it. Have goals established for aspects of your research you'd like to improve.

Setting Your Goals and Knowing Your Purpose

COE isn't a check-the-box activity or meant to stress you out, take time away from your research, and make your work more complicated. Engaging communities in your research, when done thoughtfully, can dramatically improve your science from start to finish! Feedback from relevant community members can help you more effectively identify research questions, design and implement the study or intervention, recruit and retain study participants, and interpret findings. But how?

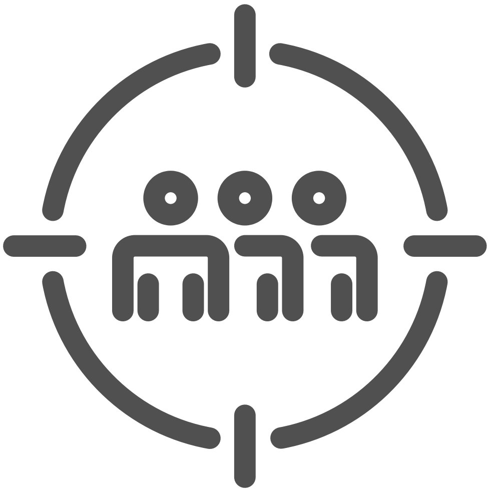
Don't just present a summary of your work – if you go in with a goal of, "tell the audience what you are working on and ask them if they understand," then that is all you will accomplish. Instead, **define one to three specific things you would like to get out of your community engagement experience.** Examples include:

- How can I improve or adjust my recruitment strategy to better connect with African American breast cancer survivors?
- If my study focuses on management of pain during cancer treatment, how should I assess pain levels in older men of different backgrounds and ethnicities?
- Are there any terms in my study protocol that community members or lay individuals may not understand?

By defining what you want to achieve or learn from your community reviewers, you can customize your presentation to provide your reviewers with the information they need to best help you. If your audience doesn't know what you want from them, they will have a hard time providing relevant feedback. Community outreach and engagement are tools that, when used effectively, lead to more relevant research questions, greater recruitment success, increased external validity, greater retention of participants, and enhanced understanding of findings.

KEY POINTS:

- **Cater to your audience.** Focusing on your audience while preparing your presentation will ensure the feedback received is relevant to your needs and you will ultimately benefit from the opportunity to engage with community members.
- **Stay away from simply summarizing the research being done.** Have goals established for aspects of your research you'd like to improve.
- **Come prepared.** Know the reasons why you are engaging community members.



Defining Your Audience and Which Community To Engage

Now that you know why you are engaging with the community about your research, it's time to determine which community you should engage with. What group of people are going to have the best insights and expertise on the questions you are trying to answer?

You need to grab your audience's attention if you want to get your ideas across. The best way to grab and hold someone's attention is to figure out who they are and what they want to know. Tell your audience why the material is important to them.

Identifying your audience will ensure that you communicate clearly and help you focus on the audience's needs. Start out by thinking about what your audience knows about the situation now. Then, think about how to guide them from their current knowledge to what you need them to know. To help you do this, try answering the following questions:

- Who is my audience?
- What does my audience already know about the subject?
- What does my audience need to know?
- What questions will my audience have?
- What's the best outcome for my research? What do I need to say to get this outcome?
- What's the best outcome for my audience? What do I need to say to get this outcome?

One of the most problematic communication myths is that you have to "dumb down" your content so that everyone everywhere can understand it. That's not true. What you should do is communicate clearly with your specific audience.

Take your audience's current level of knowledge into account when developing your presentation and approach. When you make sure you know who your audience is and clearly communicate with them, you are more likely to get useful feedback and create a productive dialogue that accomplishes your goals.

One of the most effective ways of getting an audience to engage with your work is to make sure they understand how it is relevant to them (WIFM – "What's in it for me?"). Have you explained:

- Why is your research important? Why would someone spend time and money studying this?
- How can your research benefit people – including people in your audience?
- What do you want the audience to help you with?
- What could the positive impacts of their involvement be for people like them?

KEY POINTS:

- **Ensure you effectively communicate your research.** Use the list of questions above to iron out key aspects of your audience.
- **Take your audience's current level of knowledge into account when developing your presentation and approach.**
- **Identify your audience's needs.** Doing so equips community members with the knowledge to effectively engage in dialogue regarding your research.

Organizing Your Information

Organization is key. Start by stating your presentation's purpose and exactly what you want to accomplish. Put the most important information at the beginning and include background information (when necessary) toward the end. If you tell your audience what they're going to hear about, they're more likely to be able to follow along. Establish a context for your audience before you provide them with the details. If you flood your audience with details first, they may struggle to understand what you're talking about. Don't make readers hold a lot of information in their heads before they get to your point. You may need to be especially inventive to translate complicated research approaches into more manageable language.

Organize to meet your audience's needs: Think through the questions your audience is likely to ask and then organize your material in the order they'd ask them. Another useful organizing principle is the "inverted pyramid style" where you put general information first, with specialized information or exceptions to the general information later. You begin with the shortest and clearest statement you can make about your topic, putting the most important information at the start and the background at the end.

"Chunk" your content: Don't try to pack everything into long paragraphs or dense slides. Split topics up into smaller, logical sections defined by informative headings or titles.

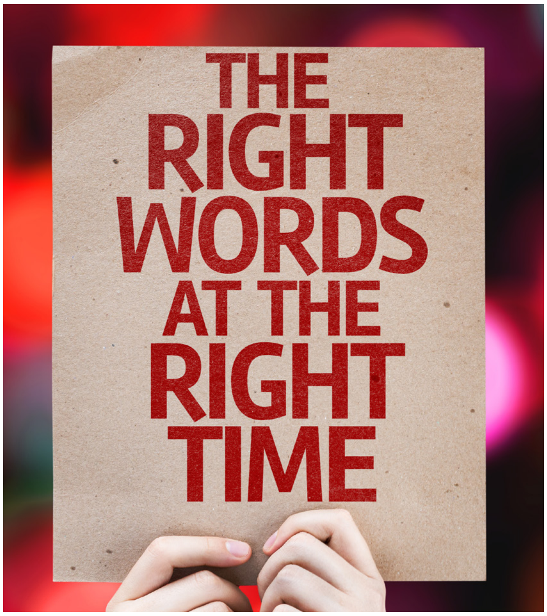
Be brief: Long, dense talks and presentations are difficult to understand. Short sections and low-density slides are easier to comprehend, and help you organize your information more effectively. Use only the information your audience needs to achieve their tops tasks. Omit unnecessary information.

Use direct address: Remember that even though your information may affect thousands or millions of people, you are speaking to specific individuals. You can avoid awkwardness by using "you" to address your audience directly, rather than using "he or she" or "his or her" or vague and impersonal phrases ("one might ask..." or "reviewers should consider...").

Choose your words and organization carefully: Start with your main idea – don't start with an exception. Word order does matter, so place your words carefully. Complexity is the greatest enemy of clear communication.

KEY POINTS:

- **Prepare your presentation in an organized fashion.** Your audience will find it easier to follow along and absorb the information being presented.
- **Avoid the use of lengthy paragraphs and slides.** Eliminating filler words and keep sections brief and to the point.
- **Be mindful of the words you use.** Stay away from complex words that require explanations. When considering the use of a word, ask yourself if someone with no scientific background would understand it.



Communicating Technical Information Effectively

Choose Words and Phrases So You Are Understood

Words are the most basic building blocks of written and spoken communication, and the words you choose can determine whether your audience will have a strong, concrete understanding of the research you present or will have no idea what you are trying to say and ask. Choose your words carefully – be precise and concise. Here are a few tips to help you communicate clearly:

- **Speak directly to your audience:** When you use "you" to address your audience, they are more likely to understand what their role is. Using "we" to refer to your organization or study team makes you more approachable.
- **Omit ~~unnecessary~~ words:** Be concise – leave out unnecessary words. This can be difficult for a subject matter expert, so it is important to have someone look at the information from the audience's perspective..
- **Use short, simple words:** Research, clinical, and scientific writing is often stodgy, full of long, dry technical terms and other jargon. Use familiar or frequently used words over the unusual.
- **Use active voice:** It eliminates ambiguity about responsibilities. Not, "It must be done," but, "You must do it." Passive voice obscures who is responsible for what. In an active sentence, the person or organization that's acting is the subject of the sentence. In a passive sentence, the person or item that is acted upon is the subject of the sentence.
- **Use the simplest form of a verb:** The simplest and strongest form of a verb is present tense. Using the present tense makes your communication more direct and less complicated.

KEY POINTS:

- **Use words like "we' and 'you.'** This makes you more approachable and your document or presentation is easier to read
- **Identify and remove unnecessary words before presenting to community members**. Don't waste your audience's time.
- **Stay away from dry, technical jargon terms.** Be mindful of vocabulary choice.
- **Active voice makes it clear who is doing what.** Passive sentences often do not identify who is performing the action and should be avoided.
- **Stick to present tense.** Frequently using conditional or future tense makes it harder for your audience to understand your meaning.

Be Mindful about Jargon and Use Plain Language

Jargon is unnecessarily complicated, technical language used to impress, rather than to inform, your audience. When we say not to use jargon, we're not advocating leaving out necessary technical terms; we are saying to make sure your other language is as clear as possible.

Special terms can be useful shorthand within a group and may be the clearest way to communicate inside the group. However, going beyond necessary technical terms to write in jargon can cause misunderstanding or alienation, even if your only audience is other specialists. Researchers, clinicians, and other specialist often fail to realize that terms they know well may be difficult to understand for others.

KEY POINTS:

- **Refer to the *NCI's Cancer Dictionary* if you're unsure of whether a term in jargon.** Consider using plain language from *NCI's definition* of the term in place.
- **Define all technical words if they are necessary to describing your research.**
- **Terms that are familiar to you may not be familiar to others.**

Minimize Acronyms and Abbreviations

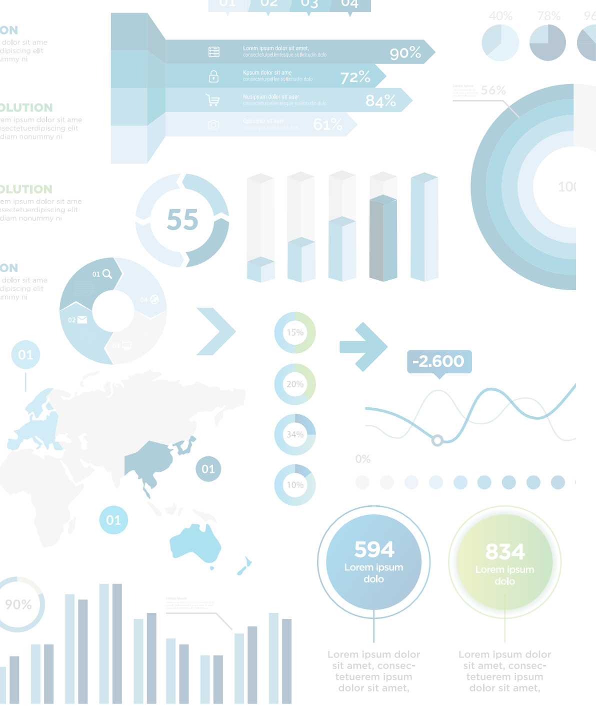
Abbreviations and acronyms were once intended to serve the audience by shortening long phrases. However, they have proliferated so much in current scientific communications that they constantly require the audience to look back to earlier pages, or to consult an appendix, to puzzle out what's being said.

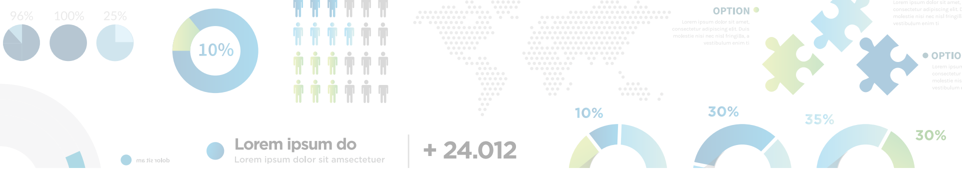
Use "nicknames": The best solution is to find a simplified name for the entity or concept you want to abbreviate – for example, "the Cancer Center" instead of "RCINJ" or "drugs that can stop growth of certain cancer cells" instead of "histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors". This gives readers meaningful content that helps them remember what you're talking about.

Example: You are studying prevalence of BRCA1 and BRCA2 in a specific patient population and are seeking feedback on how to handle patient consents and specimen collection. Instead of calling these BRCA1 and BRCA2 throughout your discussion, define them at the start of your talk and then, for the remainder of your talk, simply call them "the breast cancer genes we're studying" – there's no need to keep using the acronym when a plain language phrase is available.

KEY POINTS:

- **Limit the use of acronyms and abbreviations as best you can.** if you must use acronyms or abbreviations, they should make it easier for your audience to understand your meaning.
- **Always explain any acronyms and abbreviations used.** Provide definitions before or when first introducing them.
- **Define acronyms and abbreviations that are jargon early on.** Use the plain language alternative for the remainder of the discussion.





Visuals, Diagrams, and Graphics

When including visuals, diagrams, and graphics in your community presentation, you should:

Use examples

Examples can help you clearly communicate complicated concepts and can help your audience understand in real terms why your research is useful. Use examples in lieu of long, abstract explanations - be specific, concrete, and brief!

Use lists

Bulleted lists in written documents and presentations provide multiple benefits, including:

- Highlight levels of importance
- Help the user understand the order in which things happen
- Make it easy for the user to identify all necessary steps in a process
- Add blank space for easy reading
- Are an ideal way to present items, conditions, and exceptions

For bulleted lists, use solid round, square, or arrow-shaped ones. Large creative bullets with strange shapes tend to distract the reader and may not display properly on some computers.

Your lists will be easier to read if you use a lead-in sentence to explain and use and use left alignment (never center or right-align a bulleted list).

Use parallel construction (use the same grammatical structure for each bullet - for example, using consistent verb forms such as past tense "ran, gave, saw" in each). Also, make sure that each of the bullets in your list can make a complete sentence when combined with the lead-in sentence that introduces the list.

Use emphasis to highlight important concepts

Use **bold** and *italics* to make important concepts stand out.Limit emphasis to important information, otherwise you'll dilute its impact.

PUTTING EVERYTHING IN CAPITAL LETTERS IS NOT A GOOD EMPHASIS TECHNIQUE. ALTHOUGH IT MAY DRAW THE USER'S ATTENTION TO THE SECTION, IT MAKES IT HARDER TO READ. AND IN AN ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENT IT'S CONSIDERED SHOUTING.

Similarly, underlining will draw the user's attention to the section, but it makes it hard to read. It's better to use **bold** and *italics* for important issues.

KEY POINTS:

- **Use examples to help clarify complicated concepts.** Use these as often as possible, especially in lieu of lengthy, dry explanations.
- **Do not use lists to over-emphasize trivial matters.** Use them to focus on emphasizing important material.
- **Lists help condense information that appears cluttered and dense.** They're most effective at explaining concepts and relaying information when they are properly structured.
- **Be mindful of what you bold or italicize.** Only use these to emphasize the most important information.
- **Use simple, easy-to-read, diagrams that contain appropriate, understandable language.** Always define acronyms and abbreviations that are included in diagrams.

Use of Diagrams and Visuals

When considering the use of diagrams in your presentation, the best practice is to avoid showing complicated, chaotic diagrams to explain mechanisms, pathways, cell functions, or other advanced processes. Diagrams with an overwhelming look will only intimidate audience members, no matter how well explained, and they may become reluctant to speak up about their confusion out of fear of looking ‘dumb’ or ‘uneducated.’ Always ensure that your diagram is an appropriate size, so audience members are able to see and read the text in the diagram.

Diagram 1. is a great example of what NOT to include. This explains the function of BRCA1 in a cell. This may look like a simple diagram to someone who has done research on BRCA gene mutations, however, to someone with no scientific background, this likely does not make sense, even with the inclusion of a lay explanation. The picture is also much too small for viewers to read the text.

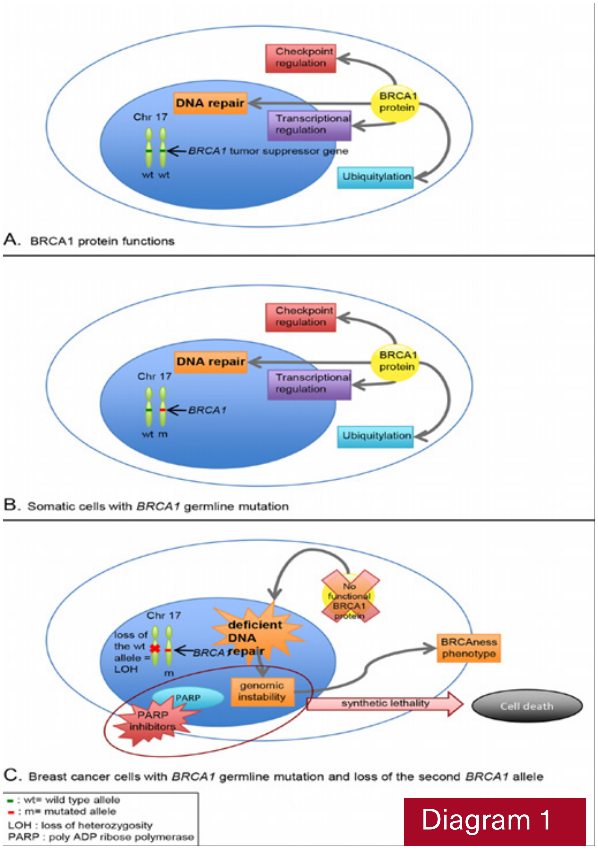


Diagram 1

Consider using something similar to **Diagram 2.** Although this diagram includes acronyms for other genes, a simple flow chart, mind map, or Venn diagram is usually easier for audience members to break down and absorb the information being presented. That, coupled with a simple explanation that omits the use of scientific jargon, is more effective at explaining the topic at hand. This image is also much larger and includes bolded text that is easy to see and read.

Remember, if there are words, abbreviations, or acronyms included on the diagram, consider including a key or a legend that spells out and defines any abbreviation or acronym that is important to know for the presentation. Use the plain language alternative interchangeably with the acronym or abbreviation throughout the presentation.

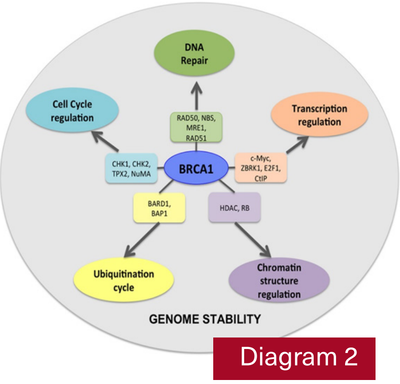
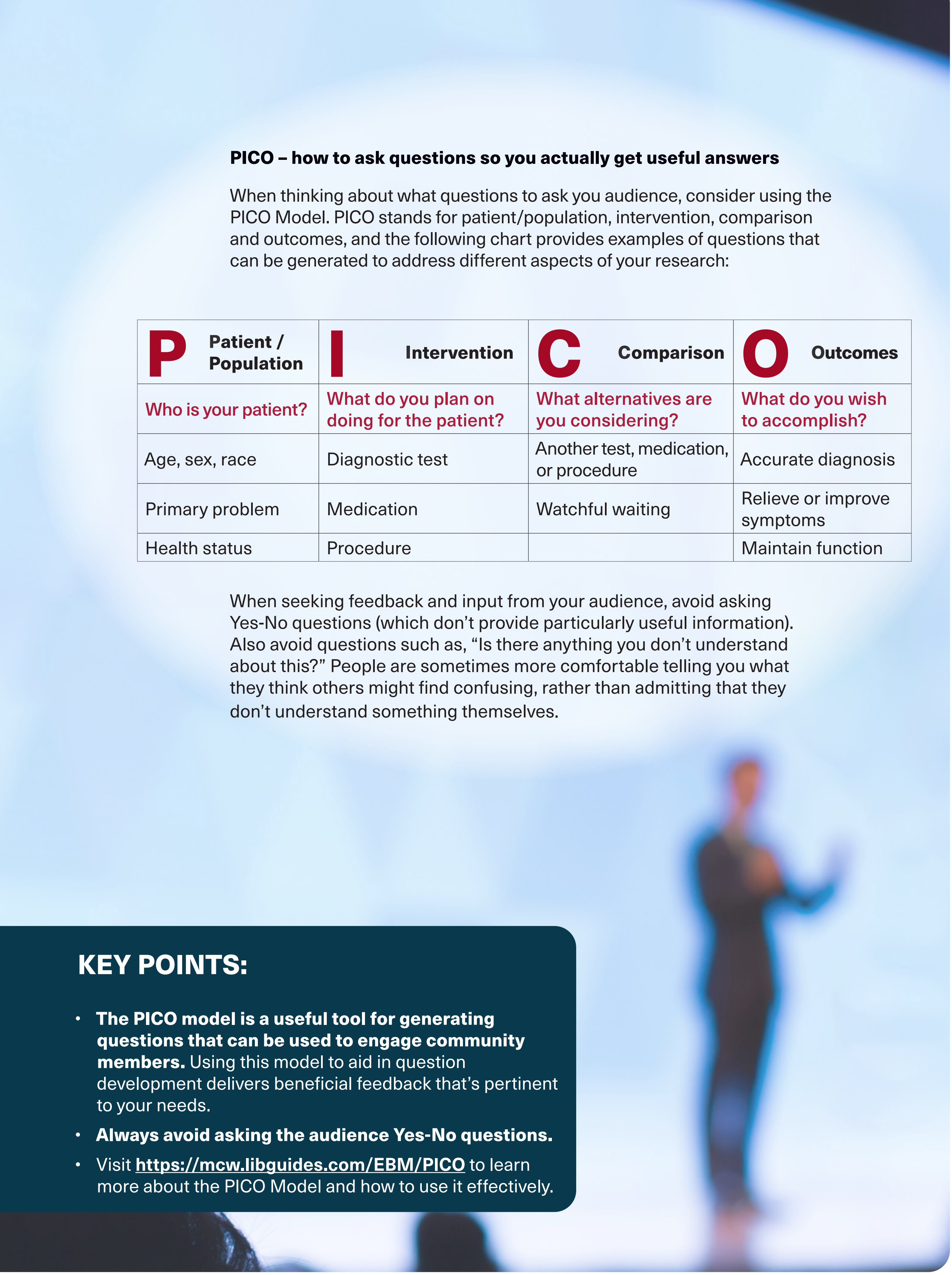


Diagram 2



PICO – how to ask questions so you actually get useful answers

When thinking about what questions to ask you audience, consider using the PICO Model. PICO stands for patient/population, intervention, comparison and outcomes, and the following chart provides examples of questions that can be generated to address different aspects of your research:

P Patient / Population	**I** Intervention	**C** Comparison	**O** Outcomes
Who is your patient?	What do you plan on doing for the patient?	What alternatives are you considering?	What do you wish to accomplish?
Age, sex, race	Diagnostic test	Another test, medication, or procedure	Accurate diagnosis
Primary problem	Medication	Watchful waiting	Relieve or improve symptoms
Health status	Procedure		Maintain function

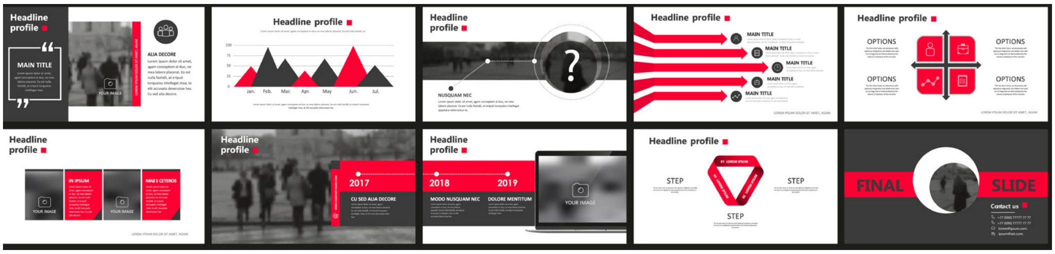
When seeking feedback and input from your audience, avoid asking Yes-No questions (which don't provide particularly useful information). Also avoid questions such as, "Is there anything you don't understand about this?" People are sometimes more comfortable telling you what they think others might find confusing, rather than admitting that they don't understand something themselves.

KEY POINTS:

- **The PICO model is a useful tool for generating questions that can be used to engage community members.** Using this model to aid in question development delivers beneficial feedback that's pertinent to your needs.
- **Always avoid asking the audience Yes-No questions.**
- Visit https://mcw.libguides.com/EBM/PICO to learn more about the PICO Model and how to use it effectively.

Section THREE

Tools, Templates, and Resources

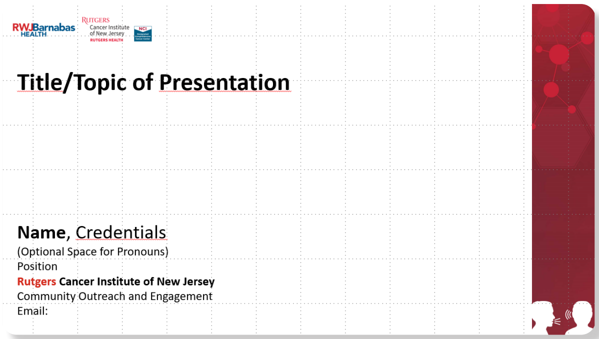


This PowerPoint template serves as a resource to help you, the researcher, better prepare your research presentations for community members. When preparing your community outreach and engagement presentation, use the *Community Researcher Presentation Template PowerPoint* to create a presentation that is concise, tailored to your audience and your purpose, and focuses on dialogue and engagement with your audience to maximize the useful feedback you will receive. This template presentation uses the following questions to structure your information and support discussion:

- What question(s) are you looking for help on today? (What is the purpose of you talking to this group of people?) – max of 3 questions. Avoid yes/no questions
- What does the group n eed to know to help you with these questions?

We recommend that you highlight key aspects of your research and focus your presentation on specific criteria that, when defined, will effectively tailor the presentation to your audience who will, in turn, be much more equipped with the information to provide you with tangible, practical feedback. The template sets the presentations up to be no more than 5 slides grouped into these 5 items:

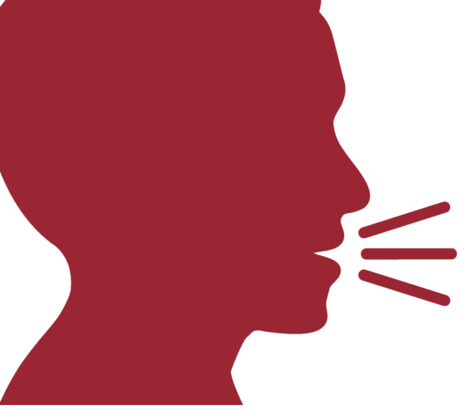
1. What you are studying – what research question you are asking
2. Why you are studying that / why it is important to answer that question
3. How you are approaching or planning to approach the question/study
4. What is special or new about your approach
5. Where are you in this process?



RWJBarnabas HEALTH | Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey RUTGERS HEALTH

Title/Topic of Presentation

Name, Credentials
(Optional Space for Pronouns)
Position
Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
Community Outreach and Engagement
Email:



Jargon in the Community

Consider choosing discussion questions from this questions list or customize or create your own questions to effectively catalyze a group discussion regarding your research and maximize the feedback you will receive:

- What about this might not make sense to someone?
- Where do you see room for improvement?
- Are there any communities/groups you feel we're not reaching with this approach?
- Are certain communities being harmed by this research?
- Can you identify any barriers [population] may face when accessing or benefiting from this research?
- How and why do [population] engage with [topic] on [location/format]?
- How do [population] assess credibility of [topic/information source]?
- In what ways does [information source] lead to action in [population]
- How can my recruitment materials be better catered to [population]?
- What terminology used in this study or presentation might offend or not be understandable to [population]?

Cancer and Health Equity Vocabulary List

Advance Health Equity with These Words and Phrases

This is a list of preferred, culturally sensitive words and phrases that should be used in place of outdated words/phrases that are stigmatizing and do not promote inclusivity.

Words/Phrases to Avoid	Best Practice
black	Black – lowercase black denotes a color, not a person
Disparities	Inequities – health differences that are avoidable, unnecessary, unfair, and unjust
Illegal immigrant	Undocumented immigrant
Indians	Native peoples; Indigenous peoples; American Indian and Alaska Native
Mentally ill	People with a mental illness; people with a pre-existing mental health disorder
Minority	Historically marginalized; BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color)
The poor/poor people	People with lower incomes
Race-based	Race-conscious
Social problem	Social injustice – for example, referring to racism as a social 'problem' diminishes its seriousness
Vulnerable population	People who are at increased risk for [condition]

For a complete list of preferred words/phrases for select communities and what to avoid, please visit:

https://rutgers.box.com/s/o2vco6553x5anzh56qv7gam0qqeb6gmb

LGBTQ+ Vocabulary Dos and Don'ts

This is a list of words and phrases that should be used when communicating with community members from the LGBTQ+ population, as well as words and phrases to avoid.

Words/Phrases to Avoid	Best Practice	Acceptable Words/Phrases	
Sexual preference	**Sexual orientation or orientation**	**Sexual orientation**	Includes heterosexual (straight), lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, or other orientations
Gay lifestyle	**LGBTQ people and their lives**	**Transgender**	People whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth
Gay rights, special rights	**Equality for LGBTQ people**	**Nonbinary**	People who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary gender categories of man and woman
Preferred pronouns	**Pronouns**	**Pansexual**	A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to any person, regardless of gender identity
Sex change	**Transition**	**Gender identity**	A person's internal, deeply held knowledge of their own gender

For a complete list of acceptable LGBTQ+ words/phrases and what to avoid, please visit: *https://rutgers.box.com/s/buas61hadlxax2lyqol4moxoyrnkl3p4*

Community-Friendly Vocabulary Cancer Words

This is a chart that includes common cancer jargon to avoid and alternative words and phrases to use when communicating your research to an audience that does not have a background in science or research.

Jargon	No Jargon
Benign	Noncancerous, not cancerous
Carcinoma	Cancer that forms in skin or tissues that line the internal organs
Chemotherapy	Using drugs to kill cancer
In situ	Cancers that remain in place and have not spread to nearby tissue
Leukemia	Cancer of bone marrow and blood
Lymphoma	Cancer that begins in immune system cells
Malignant	Cancerous
Oncology	The study of cancer
Radiation therapy	Treatment of cancer using high-energy x-rays
Sarcoma	Fat, muscle, and cartilage cancer

For a complete list of non-jargon cancer words, please visit:
https://rutgers.box.com/s/hzxwecafva5r0yzjvta3u68txbsu5nl3

Community Friendly Research Words

This is a chart that includes common words/phrases used when describing research or a research study with alternatives to use when communicating your research to an audience that does not have a background in science or research.

Jargon	No Jargon
Case study	A study following/observing a single individual
Clinical trial	Research study involving real patients
Control group	Group of people in a study that do not receive treatment being studied
Dissemination	Communicating findings of a research study
Experimental group	Group of people in a study receiving the treatment being studied
Methodology	How research is done
Outcome measures	Measurement of the effects of treatment
Placebo	Fake treatment with no effect
Protocol	Plan for a piece of research
Randomized Control Trial (RCT)	Study comparing the group receiving treatment and the group receiving no treatment

For a complete list of non-jargon research words, please visit:
https://rutgers.box.com/s/8utuez0hqqbf5qhl1wko3ltyf84ff4sq

Resources and How to Learn More

Federal Plain Language Guidelines: The Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN) developed this guide in 2011 to provide federal employees with guidance on strategies for communicating clearly to Citizens and effectively delivering information in an understandable way. *https://www.plainlanguage.gov/media/FederalPLGuidelines.pdf*

Making Data Talk NCI guide: This guide from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides an overview of the main points contained in the book Making Data Talk: Communicating Public health Data to the Public, Policy Makers, and the Press in an effort to help you communicate quantitative data in ways lay audiences can understand. *https://www.cancer.gov/publications/health-communication/making-data-talk.pdf*

Making Health Communication Programs Work, NCI: This book is a revision of the original Making Health Communication Programs Work, developed by the Office of Cancer Communications (now the Office of Communications) of the National Cancer Institute and offers guidance on effectively planning communication programs and effectively communicating information about health. *https://www.cancer.gov/publications/health-communication/pink-book.pdf*

National Library of Medicine – Readability of Patient Education Materials on the American Association for Surgery of Trauma Website Study: This study evaluated the readability of a recognized source of expert content (the American Association for Surgery of Trauma AAST's online patient education materials); the study offers guidance relevant to cancer researchers for improving the readability of educational materials for patients and community members. *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4139691/*

NCI Cancer Dictionary: This official National Cancer Institute Dictionary f Cancer Terms features over 9,000 terms related to cancer and medicine with proper pronunciation and definitions to use in place of jargon. *https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms*

Plain Language Healthcare Resources: Link to resources from the Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN), which includes links to useful health literacy tools, guidance on creating understandable health education materials, and other health literacy resources. *https://www.plainlanguage.gov/resources/content-types/healthcare/*

National Library of Medicine – Plain language communication as a priority competency for medical professionals in a globalized world: A report highlighting the impact of the international movement of goods, people, and ideas on patient-provider communication in medical training and practice and how the implementation of plain language communication training for medical professionals as a core competency can mitigate the impact of globalization, which creates challenges with regard to patient-provider communication. *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6044302/*

References used to aid in the development of this Guide:
https://rutgers.app.box.com/file/1125007809675?s=7516trfdy3mz3x111me3abkur9z3t279

Request for Details and Contact:

Request Form Details:

If you are a researcher and are interested in CHECoE's services, please complete our *Research Support Request Form.* You will be contacted by a member of our team shortly after submitting this form.

If you are interested in working with the Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence's community outreach and engagement in any capacity, please complete the *Education and Materials Request Form.*

We hope this guide was useful in improving your interactions and engagement with members of the communities that we strive to serve.

Notes

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NCI
Designated
Comprehensive
Cancer Center