

WEBINAR

Healthy  
Eating  
Research

# Communicating Research for Impact

Thursday, August 21  
1:00 - 2:30 p.m. EST



Gideon Hertz  
Burness



Abby Manishor  
Burness

# Logistics

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Participants will be automatically muted when joining

Ask any tech or logistics questions for the host in the chat bar

20 minutes of audience Q&A at the end of the session – ask questions for the presenters in the Q&A bar



# Today's webinar

## **Presentations (60 minutes)**

- **Gideon Hertz**, Associate Vice President and Co-Director of Training Programs, Burness
- **Abby Manishor**, Vice President and Director of Media Relations, Burness

## **Q&A (20 minutes)**

- *Facilitated by* Megan Lott, MPH, RDN  
Deputy Director, Healthy Eating Research

# Reality: **More Evidence $\neq$ Behavior Change**

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Humans—even you—don't simply tally up facts and data and decide if they want to act.

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**We are not thinking machines  
that feel, we are feeling  
machines that think.”**

- António R. Damásio, Neuroscientist

# How We Take in New Information



Fast Thinking

Intuition: Feeling & Emotion



Slow thinking

Cognition: Reasoning & Rational

**burness**

# How We Take in New Information



## Intuitive Fast Thinking

- 95% of thinking
- 1000% faster



## Rational Slow Thinking

- 5% of thinking

# What We Know About the Two Systems

1. The intuitive, fast-thinking brain is a gatekeeper. If something *feels wrong*, people won't consider it.
2. The rational, slow-thinking brain is often just *justifying or rationalizing* what the fast-thinking brain has already decided.
3. Our fast-thinking brain has *deeply rooted mindsets* that act as rules for how the world works broadly.
4. When our intuition and our rational minds are at odds, our *intuition usually wins*.



**Facts matter (I promise),  
but how you present  
them is make or break.**

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**Where do people's intuition or  
emotion stop them from truly  
hearing you?**

# Essentials for Communicating Research Effectively

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Six Essentials (+ One Bonus Skill)

**To help translate research  
into policy and action, we  
(researchers) must...**

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# Essentials for Communicating Research

1. Avoid Jargon
2. Understand your audience
3. Start with a shared aspiration
4. Have a clear message that communicates context, impact and value to your audience
5. Connect a story or example
6. Think strategically about where and how we communicate

# Essentials for Communicating Research

1. Avoid Jargon

# A Study on the Use of Jargon

## Key Findings:

1. “Consistent with expectations, it was found that the presence of jargon impeded processing fluency compared with the no-jargon condition.”
2. “When divergent language, via jargon, was included, our data suggests that people become more aware of the intergroup dynamics at play and subsequently report lower levels of a scientific self-schema.”
3. “Though enhancing clarity is often touted as an effective tool for improving public engagement, our findings suggest that the mere presence of jargon, with or without definitions of jargon terms, can [make it harder to process], and on self-perceptions and engagement, indirectly.”



# Translating the Jargon about Jargon

1. The presence of jargon, even with an explanation, takes more mental work to process and leads to less understanding.
2. Jargon impacts how people view themselves and their own intelligence.

Jargon-free communication leads to deeper understanding and more long-lasting engagement.



# Essentials for Communicating Research

1. Avoid Jargon
2. Understand your audience

# Understand Your Audience

## Identify your audience:

- ✓ Who is your audience?
- ✓ Why are they your audience?
- ✓ What do you want them to do?

## Understand your audience:

- ✓ What do they value?
- ✓ What do they believe already?
- ✓ What do they know already?

# Essentials for Communicating Research

1. Avoid Jargon
2. Understand your audience
3. Start with a shared aspiration or value

# Message Framework

1. **Shared Values:** What is a shared goal or vision with your audience? What do you agree on?

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Every kid deserves access to healthy,  
affordable food.



# Essentials for Communicating Research

1. Avoid Jargon
2. Understand your audience
3. Start with a shared aspiration or value
4. Have a clear message that communicates context and impact

# Good messages:

- ✓ Translate and simplify
  - ✓ Motivate and engage
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# Message Framework

- **Context.** Where are we?
- **Solution.** Where are we going?
- **Ask.** How do we get there?



# Message Framework – Supporting Messages

Urgency



Hope





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# Essentials for Communicating Research

## You Must...

1. Avoid Jargon
2. Understand your audience
3. Start with a shared aspiration or value
4. Have a clear message that communicates context and impact to your audience
5. Connect a story or example



> CHILD HUNGER

DEMS PUSH TO MAKE SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM PERMANENT

# Essentials for Communicating Research

## You Must...

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6. Think strategically about where and how we communicate

# Choosing the Right Approach

- **Overarching goal:** What are you trying to achieve?
- **Audience:** Who do you need to reach to achieve this goal?
- **Strategies:** How is your communication work going to engage your audiences and move them?
- **Activities/Tactics:** What specifically can you do to implement your strategies?
- **Metrics:** How do you know if you're succeeding?



# Communications Tactics

- **News Conference or Event/Briefing.** To release big news
- **Op-ed.** To express your perspective, usually linked to something in the news
- **Feature Story.** Showcases your issue in-depth when there is little hard news
- **Deskside Meeting.** Sit down with a reporter to brief them on a topic, not necessarily in pursuit of a specific story
- **Statement/Media Availability.** Respond to breaking news and get your organization's message to reporters and let them know you are available to comment



# Communications Tactics cont.

- **Video.** To package news or a complex subject in a way that is engaging and informative, and can be disseminated through multiple channels
- **X, LinkedIn, and others.** To establish yourself as an influencer in a particular topic area, engage with potential and existing supporters, and keep them updated on the work you are doing.
- **Facebook/Instagram.** Useful platform to give the public a way to stay informed about the work you and your organization are doing.
- **Meetings with Partners, Community Leaders or Funders.** Who can help get your message out or support the work you are doing?
- **Speaking Engagements.** Consider speaking at annual meetings, community groups, TedTalk

# Bonus Skill!

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# **Staying on-message in the face of difficult questions**

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# Staying in Control of Your Message

- Know what messages you want to deliver
- Prepare for the questions you dread
- Practice
- Repeat your messages in different ways

Remember: *You* are the expert.

# Steps to Bridging

1. Acknowledge the question
2. Use a bridging phrase
3. Deliver your message



# Bridging Phrases

- “Yes...” (the answer), “and in addition to that...” (the bridge)
- “No...” (the answer), “let me explain...” (the bridge)
- “...but I think what you’re really asking is...”
- “That speaks to a bigger point...”
- “Let me put that in perspective...”
- “What’s important to remember, however...”
- “The real issue here is...”

# Feeding America - Interview



# Thank You!

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