

Exercise 6: Grounding your Communication

Discussion Prompts

Use the prompts below to guide your group's conversation.

You can focus on a real research project or make one up for this exercise.

- If you are an oversight committee member, consider how you might use or adapt these questions in your review process—for example, by including them in application materials for researchers.
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Identifying Communities

1. **What community(ies) outside of academia might be especially interested in your research findings? Why would they be interested?**

(Example: If you are studying cancer incidence, people with cancer predisposition genes may be particularly interested.)

Access and Relationships

2. **What access do you currently have to this community(ies)?** Consider the following examples. Are there any examples you can think of that are NOT on this list?
 - a. I am a member of this community
 - b. Someone on my research team is a member
 - c. Someone in my institution (e.g., an ethics board member, an advisor) is a member
 - d. Community engagement is part of my research plan (e.g., a community advisory board, a community survey)
 - e. I have consulted with this community in past projects
 - f. I have access to a community advisory board who I have engaged

- g. I have access to a community advisory board who I have NOT yet engaged
 - h. I do not have time to engage this community
 - i. I do not have other resources to engage this community (e.g., no community advisory board, no fellow researchers)
 - j. The community is very diffuse and would be hard to consult
 - k. I don't think community engagement is relevant to my research question
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Contextualizing Findings

3. How will you integrate and communicate your findings while acknowledging the existing realities of the communities included in your work?

For example, a study may highlight the importance of avoiding ultraprocessed foods, but a community may lack access to fresh food; researchers can include statements that highlight these realities to help guide policy makers and future researchers.

Think about:

- a. **Social context** — How do your findings connect to social factors such as income, education, housing, or discrimination?
 - b. **Environmental context** — Are there environmental factors (like pollution, climate, or geography) that matter for interpreting your results?
 - c. **Accessibility** — How can you explain your findings so they're understandable not just to other scientists, but also to communities, policymakers, or the public?
 - d. **Avoiding misinterpretation** — What risks could come up if your findings are presented without this context (e.g., reinforcing stereotypes, overlooking systemic issues)?
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Positionality

- 4. Reflect on your own relationship to your research.** How do aspects of your identity (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, socioeconomic status, religion, nationality) impact your relationship to this work?

Write a short positionality statement — a reflection that explains how your perspective as a researcher is shaped by who you are. Use “Guide: Writing a Positionality Statement for Biorepository Research” (located in *Readings*) for guidance.

This is for your own reflection, though some journals or funders may ask for one.

Further Reading (Optional)

If you’d like to explore further, here are some external resources.

These are also included in the reading for this exercise.

To access these, either search the titles below online or visit the web version of this exercise for clickable links.

- How to Write a ‘Positionality Statement’ (and Why Positioning Identity Matters in Decolonising Research and Knowledge Production)
- Reflexivity in quantitative research: A rationale and beginner’s guide
- Positionality practices and dimensions of impact on equity research: A collaborative inquiry and call to the community
- Disclosure without Engagement: An Empirical Review of Positionality Statements at FAccT