

## 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.)

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### 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.

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## 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