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1 An executive summary is not enough: Innovative reports for public health

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Background

Communicating evidence effectively is key for translating research into practice, but all too often we rely on lengthy journal articles or less-than-engaging one-size-fits-all reports that don’t meet the needs of busy decision-makers or diverse audiences. This workshop will offer four principles for more effective reporting along with innovative alternatives that not only capture the attention of stakeholders, but inspire them to action.

Learning objectives

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

• Explain the role of effective reporting in knowledge translation
• State four principles for more effective reporting
• List innovative alternatives to the traditional-lengthy report

Methods

1. Welcome (5 min.)
2. Introductions, learning objectives, and agenda
3. Role of effective reporting in knowledge translation (20 min.)
   • Short lecture
   • Audience poll
   • Pair and share activity
4. Four principles for more effective reporting (25 min.)
   • Short lecture
   • Short individual activity
5. Innovative alternatives (25 min.)
   • Small group activity
   • Large group debrief
   • Presentation of innovative examples
   • Short and engaging YouTube video
Main messages

• Traditional methods of communication such as lengthy reports and journal articles are not serving the needs of busy policy makers and other stakeholders.

• We all have a stack of reading in our office that we plan to get to someday, but usually never do.

• Four principles for more effective reporting are: target your audience, develop a communications plan, layer your content, reorder your key messages.

• Different stakeholder groups have diverse information needs from research and evaluation. Distinguish the various target audiences for your report in order to tailor the content and style of the communication to their specific concerns.

• Draft a formal communication plan to identify the most appropriate types of report for each of your different audiences, and assign an appropriate time frame, budget, and priority.

• Layering is the simultaneous use of different, but linked, report formats to communicate results. Layering allows stakeholders to go as shallow or as deep as they choose into the evidence.

• Reorder your key messages and begin with the recommendations and conclusions to better engage the attention of busy managers.

• Innovative alternatives exist to the traditional journal article and lengthy report ranging from two-page summaries and screencasts, to policy briefs and podcasts.

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2 Closing the loop between life scientists and policy-makers: Lessons learned from developing policy frameworks for substance use

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Ronald Joe, Vancouver Coastal Health

Government investment in science has provided foundational steps for economic growth and improving quality of life, but has also impacted public policy development. In recent years, Canada has welcomed an increase in demand for evidence-based decision making and many efforts to engage scientists with government have been implemented at both federal and provincial levels. One such example is the Michael Smith Science and Health Policy
Fellowships that provide opportunities for academic scientists to help tackle complex health policy problems with the BC Ministry of Health. These efforts have opened up opportunities to improve the long term collaborations between scientists and government.

The purpose of the workshop will be for the participants to experience the working dynamic between scientists and government during evidence-based policy making. Using examples from previous projects, we will highlight the roles life scientists can play in the policy development process, and how two groups can most effectively work with each other.

We will begin with an introduction by the facilitators, followed by a brief overview of the use of scientific evidence in policy making, and a presentation of a case study based on the treatment of opioid addiction that was previously faced by the BC Ministry of Health. Participants will then be split into groups representing different stakeholders, with one group designated as scientific researchers and another as government policy makers. Through the guidance of facilitators, these groups will then have to work together to develop an evidence-based policy while addressing the concerns and competing interests of other stakeholder groups. The session will end with a discussion on the lessons learned in developing evidence-based policy with a group of researcher and policy makers. We will discuss how to overcome the barriers identified during the exercise, and the facilitators will share their experiences in the real-life case study. Participants will gain deeper understanding of their communication styles and perspectives, and will gain skills in how to overcome these differences and best utilize each other’s strength.

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3 Theorizing trust mechanisms in collaborative and co-productive public health contexts: A realist methodology open forum

**Justin Jagosh, University of Liverpool**

Lessons on trust building in collaborative and co-productive public health initiatives need to be better harnessed, understood and disseminated. There is much work to be done to improve trust theories that serve to explain what motivates people to sustain collaborative relationships, and/or engage in improvement efforts. This under-theorization may be partly due to the fact that trust, as a key mechanism, has a characteristic intangibility that precludes scientific measurement. A realist evaluation approach (i.e., Pawson and Tilley 1997) addresses this intangibility and produces realistic ideas about how to enter trust theories into empirical testing processes.
The following exemplifies the line of questioning that will be posed to the open-forum audience to stimulate discussion:

Does the process of co-producing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) within a participatory multi-stakeholder coalition increase or decrease trust amongst coalition members?

**Theory 1:** An MOU may increase trust due to the resources it provides (e.g., clarification of roles and intentions) and the reaction of coalition members (e.g., a feeling of ease/safety due to increased role clarity).

**Theory 2:** An MOU may decrease trust (and increase suspicion) if written contracts and agreements are used to pressure collaborators or are otherwise perceived as premature or culturally antithetical to the outlook of differently organized communities. Therefore, the context of collaboration, nature and urgency of the research agenda, timeline, as well as the skill in collaborating amongst the collaborative team will have an impact on how trust manifests in context.

The forum material will catalyze a stimulating group conversation about the nature of trust stemming from the presenter’s experience using realist methodology for community-based participatory assessment. The workshop will use an ‘open mic’ concept to have participants share their wealth of insight into the nature of trust in collaborations and how to improve trust theories using a realist lens on contexts and mechanisms.

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4 How to develop a structural approach to knowledge exchange?  
Practice-based workshop on effectively linking communication activities between researchers and policy-makers

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**Background**

While implementation varies, the principle that researchers should engage with policy is well established within public health. There has also been an increasing professionalization of research communication, and investment by universities into public relations and engagement. However, traditional “comms” can be disconnected with pathways to impact; knowledge exchange with policy and practice is often opportunistic and constrained by limited time and
resources; and measuring and evaluation of impact remains challenging. In short, individual effort is plentiful, but strategy and structures can be missing.

Learning objectives

This workshop draws on findings from the comparison of knowledge exchange strategies and practices of five UKCRC Public Health Research Centres of Excellence (PHRCE) in the United Kingdom (Van Der Graaf et al, 2017). It will help participants plan for more strategic and structural approaches to knowledge exchange, by identifying how existing strengths in their communications practices can be used as part of more joined up pathways to impact. It will be useful both for early career researchers aiming to develop their own knowledge exchange plans, and also more senior delegates looking to build organizational solutions to achieving impact.

Methods and formats

The workshop will explore the importance of interlinking knowledge activities that engage policymakers at different spatial levels (e.g. local, regional and national). It will be led by experienced UK communication and knowledge exchange professionals. In small groups, participants will develop a structural knowledge exchange approach in response to a selection of case studies drawn from the UKCRC PHRCE, which will be complemented with participants own submitted challenges in policy/practice engagement. Participants will pitch their proposals for structural approaches to the other groups. The group will then collectively reflect on these approaches, and explore how these could be adapted for their own organizations, including documenting/ evaluating their interlinking activities for future impact case studies.

Program

- Activity Time Introduction: aims, format, facilitators, participants (5 min.)
- Presentation: interlinking KE activities to develop structural approaches (15 min.)
- Facilitated activity in small groups to develop their own structural KE approach in response to a selected case study (25 min.)
- Each group pitches their proposed approach to the other groups (3 min. per group) (15 min.)
- Collective reflection on the proposed approaches and how to potentially implement and document them (10 min.)
- Close of workshop (5 min.)

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