The Workshop

A checklist for your communications about air quality and environmental health
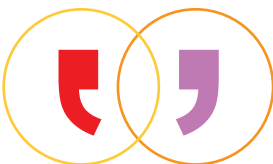
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Use this checklist, based on the ['How to talk about air quality and environmental health guide'](), to write and check your communications.

Step 1. **Understand how people think about air quality and environmental health**

Identify the unhelpful thinking you need to avoid and the helpful thinking you want to surface
- *Check.* pp. 8–9 in the guide for current thinking about air quality and environmental health to avoid and embrace

Step 2. **Decide who to talk to and about**

Identify your persuadable audience
- *Check.* Don't construct communications for the already convinced or the noisy opposition

Identify your agents. Be clear on who needs to do what
- *Check.* Focus on agents with the most influence. Emphasise collective action, avoid individual behaviour

Step 3. **Build the structure of your communications using vision, values, barriers, solutions formula**

First > Articulate the better world we want. Flip the problem to an inclusive vision
- *Check.* Your vision is not the removal of something bad
- *Check.* Your vision uses concrete language and is about people's lives not processes or policies

Then > Identify the helpful collective values to connect with your audience
- *Check.* pp. 15–16 for helpful values to embrace and unhelpful values to avoid

Then > Name the barriers and problems that are in the way of the vision and solutions
- Check. You have named the agents responsible for removing these barriers

Finally > Present solutions. Include an action proportionate to the problem

Step 4. **Use language that deepens people's understanding**

Identify helpful frames to use. See p.17 for helpful frames
- *Check.* Avoid economic and fear frames

Plan your metaphors
- *Check.* Do not use war or disaster metaphors. Use 'environmental health ground crew' and 'upstream environments, downstream health' metaphors, see pp. 18–19 for more on helpful metaphors to embrace and unhelpful metaphors to avoid

Use clear and concrete language

- *Check.* Can I draw a picture of this? Particles of toxic carbon in our neighbourhood air versus emissions

Use an explanatory chain where you need to explain complex science or cause and effects, see pp. 20–21

Step 5. Check for common errors that surface unhelpful thinking

- Lead with the cake not ingredients. Do not lead with facts, problems or policy solutions.
- Tell your story, not theirs. Don't myth bust or negate. Avoid phrases like "you may have heard" or "it is NOT true".
- People and planet, over money and fear. Don't use money, safety or fear as the 'why'. Avoid phrases like "how can we afford not too", "it will cost more in the long run if we don't".
- People do things. Turn passive language into agentive language, and check you have the correct agents. Use "people in government set rules that reduced the number of cars in our cities" not "how we cleared our air".

Step 6. Step 6. Test your communications

- *Check.* Test with your persuadable audience, not the convinced or the opposition

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