Checklist for
COVID-19 Communications

The Workshop

Crafting your narratives to encourage good decision-making

Use this checklist, based on the **How to Talk about COVID-19 Guide**, to write and check your communications.

Step 1 — Understand how people think about COVID-19 and related issues

Identify the unhelpful thinking you need to avoid and the helpful thinking you want to surface.

> CHECK pp 6 – 9 in the guide for current thinking about COVID-19 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 12 – 13 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.

> CHECK Is your proposed action proportionate to the problem?

Step 4 — Use language that deepens people's understanding

Identify helpful frames to use. See pp 15 – 16 for helpful frames.

> CHECK Avoid economic and fear frames.

Plan your metaphors.

> CHECK Do not use war or disaster metaphors. Use journey navigation metaphors, see p 18.

Use clear and concrete language.

> CHECK Can I draw a picture of this? Two metres apart vs keeping your distance.

Use an explanatory chain where you need to explain complex science or cause & effects, see p 19.

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 mythbust or negate. Avoid phrases like *"you may have heard"* or *"it is NOT true"*.

> **People & planet, over money & 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 *"During the COVID lockdown employers made X people redundant"* not *"X people lost their jobs"* or *"X jobs were lost"*.

Step 6	Test your communications

⊕ CHECK **Test with your persuadable audience, not the convinced or the opposition.**