

From Principles to Practice

*Translating communications principles into
institutional practices and materials*

Naomi Charalambakis, PhD
Director of Communications & Science Policy

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Principles Are Easy...

Most organizations can agree on the principles of good communication:

➔ Authentic

➔ **Proactive / Openness**

➔ Clarity (plain language)

➔ Consistent

➔ **Provides context / Educational**

➔ Bi-directional

➔ **Acknowledges shared goals & values**

➔ Aware of Audience



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Key Takeaways: Communicating About Animal Research

	<p>Know Your Audience</p>	<p>Public views vary by gender, education, political ideology, and familiarity with science. Tailor communication to reflect audience values and concerns.</p>
	<p>Leverage Trusted Messengers</p>	<p>Veterinarians, scientists, and medical professionals are viewed as the most credible sources. Involve them in outreach and public-facing efforts.</p>
	<p>Promote Openness</p>	<p>Support increases when people know animals are treated humanely. Share information about care standards, ethical oversight, and the reasons animals are used.</p>
	<p>Focus on Education</p>	<p>Many people lack understanding of animal research. Educational efforts should explain the necessity of certain types of studies, animal welfare measures, and the development of alternatives.</p>
	<p>Tailor the Message</p>	<p>Messages emphasizing humane care, shared benefits for humans and animals, and scientific necessity are most effective with diverse audiences.</p>

Thompson-Iritani SA, Gopee NV, Newsome JT, Bear T, Skinner B, Preisig PA (2025). *Am J Vet Res.*



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...Practice is Hard

The more difficult question is how to translate them into institutional practices (policies, templates, governance structures, and standing materials) that make effective communication **routine rather than situational.**



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Proactive and Open

The Key: Don't wait for the controversy to happen. Build standing infrastructure now.

External:

- Public-facing explainer pages (“Our Oversight Process,” “Our Commitment to Animal Welfare,” etc.)
- Plain language FAQs
- Speak with the media, provide proactive statements *(before anti-animal research groups claim the narrative)*

Internal:

- Pre-drafted statements, templates for common questions or concerns
- Media training for staff (before crises occur)



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Acknowledge Shared Values

The Key: Think beyond “this is what we did” to “this is why we made this decision responsibly”

Ensure public-facing communications address the following:

- Why this approach and this model is scientifically necessary
- Why alternatives cannot answer the questions at this time
- Multi-layer review process and why this is important
- Steps taken to minimize harm or discomfort during the study
- How this work advances human/animal health

Internal incentives to consider:

- Highlighting examples of responsible communication
- Public engagement awards
- Protected time (administrative support, designated outreach hours, etc.) for community engagement



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Provide Context / Promote Education



Common mistake: “being transparent” when actually organizations are just releasing isolated facts without explanation..



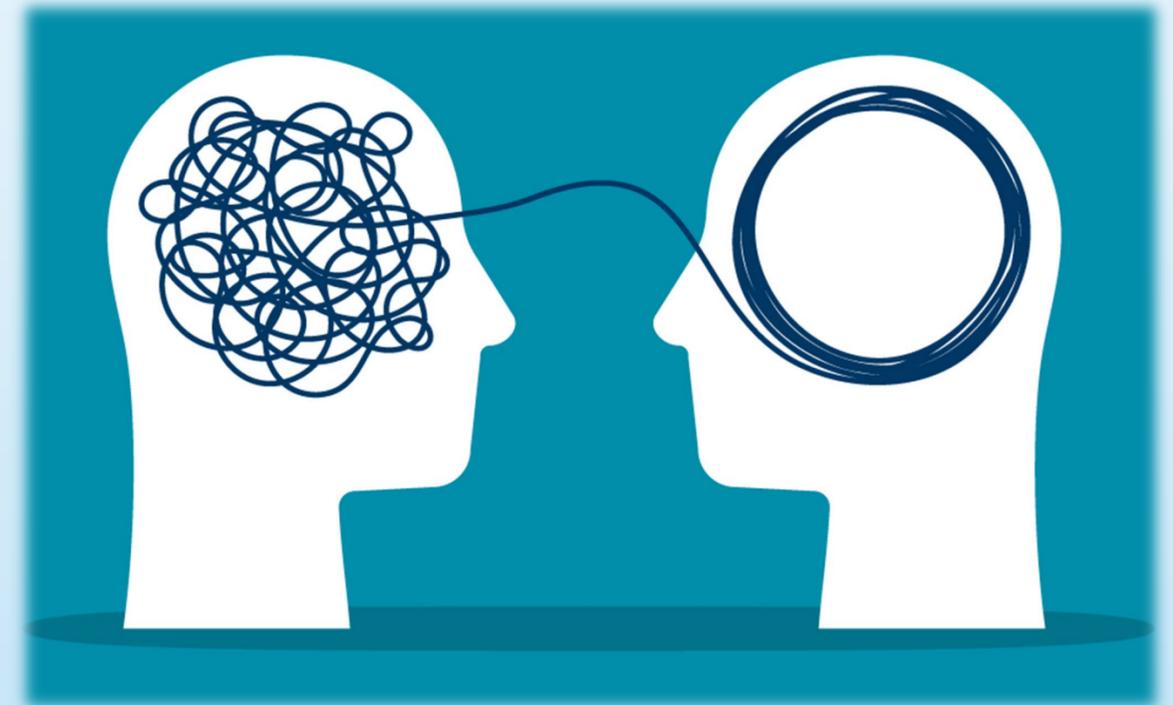
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Provide Context / Promote Education

The Key: Provide more than just facts. Paint the whole picture – the how and why

- **Use plain/accessible language in all public-facing documents.**
- **Go beyond the research topic... explain why and how it is studied**
 - *If a sensitive species is involved, share why a dog is necessary instead of a mouse, rat, etc.*
- **Proactively share how alternative approaches are considered AND used.**



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Provide Context / Promote Education

The Key: Provide more than just facts. Paint the whole picture – the how and why

- **Try to avoid general, boiler-plate language when responding to the media**
→ personalize by explaining scientific necessity, organizational safeguards, review processes, recognition of concerns, etc.
- **Point media and/or public inquiries to available materials on your website (FAQs, fact-sheets, clinical breakthrough examples)**



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Resources

- **Institutional openness frameworks**
 - UK Concordat on Openness
 - U.S. Animal Research Openness initiative
 - European transparency agreements
- **Public education/advocacy organizations**
 - AMP
 - PRIM&R (ethics training, IACUCs, IRBs)
 - AALAS (lab animal workforce resources)
 - UAR
 - EARA



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The screenshot shows the AMP logo at the top left with the tagline "We keep medical advances moving ahead." Below the logo is a graphic of a hand holding a speech bubble with "AMP ADVICE" inside. The main title of the document is "The Benefits of Sharing Your Own Challenging News Instead of Allowing Activists to Do It for You". The text discusses the importance of sharing challenging news with the public and provides advice for animal facilities. Key sections include: "Tell your own story", "Make an expert/spokesperson available", "If an error was clearly made, consider admitting it.", and "Never make absolute promises." A dark banner with lightbulb icons is overlaid on the right side of the screenshot, containing the text: "AMP Partner Resources: AMP Advice on Communications and Countering Animal Activism".

- AMP PARTNER RESOURCES
- AMP Advice: Communications, Countering Animal Activism and Science Policy Topics
- FOIA/Records Requests Resources
- Recent NIH/OLAW Records Requests
- Animal Rights Organizations
- List of Animal Rights Organizations
- AMP Partner Resources: AMP Videos
- AMP Partner Resources: Webinar Recordings



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Thanks to research,
they'll have more
time to be
best friends.

*Animal research
saves human and
animal lives.*



Thank you!

E-mail: naomi@amprogress.org

Phone: (202) 624-8811



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