

# COMMUNICATION NOTES



## HOW TO GIVE A RESEARCH PRESENTATION TO DECISION MAKERS

The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation's Communicating Research/Appraising Evidence Workshop in February 2000 produced a tool too good to keep to ourselves. At the end of the workshop, participants produced a list of key lessons for researchers to use when explaining the results of their work to decision makers. The following is what was said, although we have taken some editorial licence to ensure the messages are clear.

### Preparing for your presentation...

1. Identify the specific decision that your research is aimed at and be able to state it in clear, unambiguous terms.
2. Understand who the decision makers in your audience will be, what they know already, and what new information they need - then tailor your presentation accordingly using plain language.
3. Take into account the political, legislative, fiscal, social, etc. factors that provide the context for the issue and for your presentation.
4. Create a "no surprises" environment - develop a working relationship with the decision makers early on in the research process.

### During the presentation...

1. Answer the audience's "Why are we here?" question as quickly as possible. Start with a clear statement about the decision or issue that your research is addressing and the objective of the meeting.
2. State your key messages up front and clearly - strip out the jargon.
3. Focus on the implications of your research for the decision; downplay the methods and other technical issues, but be prepared to provide succinct information on them if asked.
4. Be up front about the limitations of the research results. For example, can they be generalized to other situations?
5. Establish the credentials of the researchers and presenter(s) but be brief and to the point.
6. Use humour, energy and style in your presentation - but make sure it is a style you are comfortable with.

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