

**THE BLACK BOOK**  
**crisis and communications manual**

**3RD EDITION**

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NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH  
MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH  
AMERICANS FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS  
FOUNDATION FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

section 3:  
crisis prevention  
and outreach

### Taking a Proactive Approach

- Merchandise good media.
- In all press releases/conferences regarding new medical advances, emphasize the role of animal research in the discovery.
- Enlist support from patients and their families, donors, community leaders, legislators and students to speak out on this topic.
- Distribute newsletters and news reports featuring medical discoveries developed by using an animal model.
- Invite outside groups to educational programs conducted by medical staff.
- Arrange for community members, legislators and students to tour animal laboratory facilities and research labs.
- Arrange for researchers and veterinarians to meet with members of support groups to discuss animal research issues.
- Identify and train certain individuals from each group to serve as supportive spokespeople.
- Participate in public outreach and K–12 educational programs.
- Contact your elected officials about important issues in biomedical research.
- Recognize local legislators for their support for research.
- Speak out! Don't hide or ignore the presence of animals at your facility.

### Employee Relations: Enlist Support and Understanding

- Offer educational programs on animal research for your professional and support staff.
- Publicize advances in medicine as a result of animal research in the employee newsletter.
- Distribute educational materials in paychecks.
- Institute a monitoring program alerting employees to signs that trouble may be starting.
- Enlist the cooperation of animal caretakers/technicians.
- Make employees feel as though they are a valuable part of the research process.
- Offer media and crisis training (specifically about contact with the public, media and activists) to your researchers, staff and administrators — even if they will not be a designated spokesperson. This is important because even if your employees can't or won't be in a position to talk about your facility, they often will be in a position where they will need to explain what they do in a more general way (e.g. at a dinner party, a family gathering, in line at the grocery store, at the gas station). This can be an opportunity to educate the general public and will empower them and prepare them to say the right thing when they must speak out.
- There are a number of ways to say “no comment” without sounding as if there is something to hide. For example:
  - » “I’m really not the right person to ask about this. I’ll tell you what: Why don’t you come inside and I’ll get you a cup of coffee while I find the right person to answer these questions?”
  - » “I’m sorry — I can’t answer that question. Wilma Flintstone is the person you really need to talk with. Let me get your name and number, and I will make sure she calls you right away.”
- Preparing your employees through media training will make them excellent supporters and advocates for medical research to the general public — something that will benefit us all.

### Animal Research Statistics

The following are concise examples of responses to the many questions an employee could be asked. From this beginning, an employee can add examples to explain his or her position.

- Virtually all medical advances of the last century were developed as a result of animal research (e.g. coronary bypass, chemotherapy, polio vaccines, measles, Alzheimer’s, AIDS drugs).
- Approximately 95 percent of all research animals are rats and mice.
- Less than 1 percent of all animals used in research are dogs and cats.
- Humane treatment of research animals is necessary to obtain valid data.
- Years ago, people with severe heart disease could not be saved. Today, with medical advancements such as angioplasty and heart bypass surgery, many more people are living longer and more productive lives.
- Animal rights groups want to stop all animal research. That would be disastrous for us all.
- Some animal species — ones that have inherent diseases that affect humans — are excellent models for studying certain diseases (e.g. mice/diabetes, dogs/narcolepsy).
- Public polls in many states have shown overwhelming support for research and continued animal use in biomedical research.
- Humans are not the only beneficiaries of animal research. Our pets and other animals have benefited as well (e.g. cancer, heart disease, joint replacements, diabetes).

- This list could be longer, but the main point is: **WITHOUT RESEARCH INVOLVING LABORATORY ANIMALS, THESE ADVANCES WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.**

#### **Additional Tips for Responding to Requests for Information About Animals at Your Facility**

- Question: Are you doing animal research?
  - » Answer: The institute conducts some animal studies to advance \_\_\_\_\_ science and to develop effective medical treatments.
- Question: What kinds of animals are used?
  - » Answer: The institute uses rodents, fish and frogs. Rodents account for 95 percent of all animals used in research in the United States. Less than 1 percent of all animals used are nonhuman primates, which includes dogs and cats.
- Question: I heard you use [type of animal].
  - » Answer: I believe that a couple [type of animal] may have been used in our \_\_\_\_\_ study. As you may know, \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the most common and painful childhood diseases and can lead to hearing loss. That study was completed a year ago.
- Question: Have you ever used cats and dogs?
  - » Answer 1: No, the institute does not use cats or dogs in its studies.
  - » Answer 2: Yes, the institute uses a few dogs that are acquired through a USDA-regulated Class A dealer.
- Question: Why do you use animals in your research?
  - » Answer: The institute is involved in medical research to better understand the basic biological mechanisms of the [heart/ear/brain/etc.]. Rodents provide scientists with a reasonable way to study these functions. By law, scientists must first test medical treatments and new drugs for effectiveness and safety on animals before using them on humans.
- Question: Why don't you use computer models?
  - » Answer: Whenever possible, the institute does use nonanimal models, such as computers, but a computer model cannot fully simulate a living system. It is impossible to explore, explain or predict the course of many diseases or the effects of many treatments without observing and testing the entire living system. Sometimes we need animals in conjunction with alternative methods to fully conduct our research. Incidentally, there are strong economic incentives to substitute research animals with computers or other complementary nonanimal methods whenever possible. Research animals are extremely expensive to purchase, house and oversee during the research study.
- Question: Where do you get the animals?
  - » Answer: The institute purchases rodents that are bred for the purpose of research from commercial, USDA-approved Class A facilities.
- Question: How long have you been conducting animal research?
  - » Answer: We began doing this research when we established the \_\_\_\_\_ department about \_\_\_\_\_ years ago.

- Question: Can I see the facility?
  - » Answer: Yes, we conduct tours of our facility. I would be happy to talk to our director and see if we can arrange a time for you to visit.
  - Note: Establish the reason for the visit and the agency to which the visitor belongs. Set policy for who and when ahead of time. Often, the offer to allow a visit is all that is necessary to make them feel you have nothing to hide and they will never take you up on that offer. On the other hand, an activist could visit to try and find damaging information or to “case” your facility. Generally, students, concerned citizens, etc., who call should be offered a tour, as should reporters. When it comes to an identified representative of an animal rights group, be wary. Make sure there is a vet or a vet tech with the party on every tour to explain things and answer any questions. Always make sure the vivarium staff knows a visitor is coming. Do not allow any cameras, tape recorders or video cameras.
- Question: Do the animals suffer while you are conducting the experiments?
  - » Answer: The use of animals in research and testing is strictly controlled. The veterinarians and certified animal technicians at the institute are very involved in the care and treatment of our animals and make every effort to minimize any discomfort our rodents, frogs and fish may experience. It is their job to ensure the animals are given proper drugs to eliminate pain or discomfort. As mandated by federal law, the institute also has an Animal Care and Use Committee, which evaluates every animal experiment and ensures any pain and suffering is minimized and controlled with appropriate drugs.
- Question: Are you killing these animals?
  - » Answer: Some rodents are euthanized to provide tissue samples or if they become sick.
- Question: How do you kill these animals?
  - » Answer: The institute uses the standard methods for euthanasia that are in accordance with the American Veterinary Association’s guidelines, and we ensure this process is painless.

## Media Relations

Note: Additional information on this topic is available from NCABR online ([ncabr.org/resources/mediarelations.html](http://ncabr.org/resources/mediarelations.html)).

### Finding a Voice

Designate spokespeople *before* they are needed — and select speakers who can communicate with the lay audience and talk in nonjargon terms. You may want different speakers for different roles (e.g. one to speak to the media and one to speak to animal rights activists who demonstrate at your facility). In choosing a media spokesperson, be careful not to pick someone “too important,” as this could cause the media to give the story more importance than it should have.

Make sure all facility employees know who the official spokesperson is and how to contact him or her.

- Train all designated speakers how to respond to different audiences in both noncrisis and crisis situations.
- Practice and train for interviews. Give pointers to *all* staff in training sessions, as well as to the designated facility speakers.
- Practice interviews, confrontations and debates on the various topics.

### Types of Media Contact

Consider the different types of contact you will have with the media as you train.

#### SCHEDULED INTERVIEW

- May be arranged by the public relations department or by a call directly to you. (Always call your public relations department before accepting an interview.)
- You’ll have time to prepare (one hour to one month).
- Try to determine the line of questioning in advance.
- These interviews generally are positive, though not always.
- It could be held in your office/building or in-studio.
- Usually, the reporter is seeking specific information about a defined topic, which he or she will reveal to you. He or she probably will not reveal, however, the specific questions to be asked.

#### UNSCHEDULED INTERVIEW

- May be from referral from colleague or public relations department.
- Little or no time to prepare.
- You may not be the right resource.
- Can be either positive or negative.
- Reporter usually is tracking a lead about something (e.g. a leak, a statement about quarterly financials, FDA approvals).
- Could be phone call or an interception on the sidewalk in front of your office.
- Could be a call to someone who works at your facility. Prepare *all* employees for calls/information requests, not just from reporters but also from animal rights groups.



**AMBUSH**

- Usually negative.
- No advance warning (except for seasonal occurrences or concurrent happenings).
- Often you're not the right resource; the reporter just is looking for anyone from the organization.
- Can be defused with the right approach.

**Prepare Statements, Educational Material and Documentation for Proactive AND Reactive Use**

You should have a variety of informational and educational resources about your organization and its research activities at your disposal. Just because you have them, however, does not mean you necessarily need to use them. Animal rights activists want to put you on the defensive. If you appear to be trying to justify your work too much, they will have succeeded.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR BACKGROUND MATERIAL**

- A list and brief description of your organization's research projects involving the use of animals
- Institutional Statement on the Use of Animals in Research
- FAQs
- Standard responses to questions
- Number of projects at your organization that do not use animals (this information can be used to put animal research in perspective)
- Videos showing your institution's facilities, research being performed by your organization or similar footage. Make sure all videos you distribute to the press are suitable for public viewing.
- Examples of medical advances that have resulted from animal research
- Your institution's policies and procedures on humane animal care

**PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW OR NEWS CONFERENCE**

- Develop a plan. Prepare three essential points you want to convey.
- State your most important bottom line first, then build with examples in a logical sequence. (Edit yourself rather than be edited.)
- Prepare several quotable statements, each about 15 to 30 seconds long. If the interview becomes difficult, use these as appropriate statements.
- Remember to address concerns of the public and to be honest and sincere.
- Use everyday words, not technical jargon. If a scientific term is used, give meaning. Keep it simple and clear.
- Use descriptive, memorable and colorful phrasing.
- **NOTHING IS OFF THE RECORD.** Don't say anything you would not want to be quoted, seen on TV or read in print.
- Use some numbers and statistics, but not too many.
- If you don't know the answer, don't give an opinion or a guess. Tell the media you will get back to them with that information.
- Be ready for very general questions. This is your opportunity to present one of your prepared responses.

**STANDARD LANGUAGE**

Similarly, you should have boilerplate language ready to be dropped into press releases. The public relations representative on the crisis management team should compile the information to be included in the statement released to the media and to the public with vital facts. Prepare language on the following:

- The importance of the humane use of animals in biomedical research
- Your institution's commitment to high-quality animal care. Note that you follow rigid policies and procedures to ensure maintenance of quality animal care in accordance with local, state and federal regulations. Also state the importance of good animal care to good research.
- Research projects that use alternative methods to animal models (e.g. computer simulation, cell and tissue cultures)
- Federal and other policies and guidelines for animal care
- The differences between animal welfare and animal rights
- Official sanctions, including:
  - » Current regulations and guidelines followed in the care and use of animals in research
  - » NIH statement of assurance and compliance
  - » AAALAC accreditation
  - » USDA inspection documents

**The Media Interview****STRATEGIES FOR INTERVIEWS: CONTENT**

Spokespeople should be trained to prepare appropriate responses to questions for both crisis and noncrisis situations *before* an incident occurs.

Spokespeople should reiterate in their responses several of the messages contained in the press release given to the media.

The following are examples of statements that should be addressed by the research facility spokesperson:

- Commitment to medical progress
- Humane care of laboratory animals by veterinary and research staff
- Benefits of research for human and/or animal health
- Loss to patients and families if research project is stopped
- Research time lost on projects
- Total dollar damage, including stolen or harmed animals and physical damage to property
- Potential harm to stolen animals if they are released outside their protective environment
- Stress the seriousness of the "criminal" activity that occurred during the incident and resolve to prosecute to the full extent of the law

Speakers must prepare to answer questions about the public's concerns regarding animals in research. Some of the most common concerns actually are myths propagated by animal rights groups:

- Animals suffer pain and are abused in research labs.
- Stolen pets are used in research laboratories.
- Alternative methods can replace animals used in research.
- Animals have rights and are forced to endure life in labs.
- Animals never should be used for cosmetic or product testing.
- Animal research is scientific fraud; animals are different than people.

#### STRATEGIES FOR INTERVIEWS: TECHNIQUES FOR DELIVERING RESPONSES

- **SHOW** empathy, sensitivity, confidence and pride.
- **BE** comfortable, honest, friendly, positive and sincere.
- **PREPARE** and practice your answers.
- **ANTICIPATE** difficult questions.
- **USE** simple language, be brief and repeat comments.
- **TAKE CHARGE** and set an agenda of what you want to convey.
- **BEWARE OF** defensive, emotional or confrontational behavior.
- **SIT OR STAND** in a relaxed and comfortable manner.
- **DON'T** act defensive, emotional or confrontational.

#### PREPARATION TIPS FOR DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- Don't be intimidated. Watch out for loaded questions (e.g. "Don't you feel like an ogre?").
- Turn a negative into a *positive* statement that supports research.
- If asked to comment on research described as gory, say that you have heard anecdotes or have seen pictures like that, but that you can't comment specifically because you don't know the true facts.
  - » Caution the questioner that many photos and incidents have been staged or that photos depict research done decades ago.
  - » Say, "Animal cruelty today is an exception, not the rule. Many of these photos are from the 1960s, and most were staged for optimum effect."
- Take charge. Don't just answer questions; give your comments with personal feeling but not anger.

#### STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING RESPONSES

- Develop a plan. Prepare three essential points that you want to convey.
- State your most important bottom line first, then build with examples in logical sequence (edit yourself, rather than be edited).

- Prepare several short statements that summarize your work and the mission of your institution — so-called SOCOs (strategic overriding communication objectives). From your SOCOs, develop slightly more expanded versions, or “elevator speeches” (ones you could deliver in the time it takes to get from the first floor to the fifth floor in an elevator). These are often the sound bites reporters use. If the interview becomes difficult, use these statements.
- Remember to address concerns of the public. Be honest and sincere.
- Use everyday words. Do not use technical jargon. If a scientific term is used, give meaning.
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE AND CLEAR.**
- Use descriptive, memorable and colorful phrasing.
- **NOTHING IS OFF THE RECORD.** Don’t say anything you would not want to see on television or in print.
- Use some numbers and statistics, but not too many.
- If you don’t know the answer, don’t give your opinion or guess. Tell the media you will get back to them with that information.
- If you make a mistake that alters the meaning of your message, pause, correctly restate the word or phrase and continue.
- Keep eye contact with the reporter. Do not look at the camera.
- If you deliver a prepared statement at a press conference, don’t read it. Instead, look down to check notes, absorb your thoughts, look up and begin speaking. Maintain contact with the audience.
- Be ready for very general questions. This is your opportunity to present one of your planned responses.

**TIP FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS: CORRECT WRONG ASSUMPTIONS**

Don’t let it slide if questions contain erroneous information. Correct it.

- Question: Many people are concerned about the large number of stolen pets used in research. What is your institution doing to prevent that?
  - » Answer: I haven’t seen any evidence that pets are being stolen and used in research, either here or at other institutions. We take many precautions to guard against this. We buy cats and dogs only from animal dealers licensed by the USDA. We require our dealer to have people who sell their dogs sign a form acknowledging their animals may be used in research. We are evaluating a scanner that can detect microchips embedded under a pet’s skin as a means of identification. Although we believe animals play a vital role in biomedical research, there is no place for pets in the laboratory.

**TIP FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS: NEVER REPEAT BUZZ WORDS**

Don't echo a reporter's negative statements. Restating the negative is a form of legitimizing the reporter's assumption.

- Question: PAWS says the bone marrow transplant experiment on monkeys is tantamount to torture.
  - » Wrong Answer: We are not torturing animals.
  - » Right Answer: Bone marrow transplants can be a life-saver for people with deadly cancers like leukemia. In this study, monkeys are prepared for bone marrow transplants in exactly the same way that young children are prepared when they receive this treatment. Obviously, we take extreme care. We are studying the effects of enhanced bone marrow treatments on a primate model whose immune system is similar to ours.

**TIP FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS: BEWARE OF HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS**

Don't be pressured into speculating.

- Question: What if your facility fails a USDA inspection?
  - » Answer: I would prefer not to deal with a hypothetical situation. We operate strictly within USDA guidelines, and I have no reason to believe this will happen.

**TIP FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS: DON'T FALL FOR A OR B QUESTIONS**

- Question: Is it true that dogs and cats are stolen for sale to research laboratories or otherwise acquired in illegal ways?
  - » Answer: The likelihood of animals being stolen for sale to a research laboratory is *very remote*, in part because relatively few cats and dogs are used in biomedical research. In fact, approximately 95 percent of all research animals are rodents. In addition, research institutions that use animals acquire them only from federally licensed dealers and other controlled sources.

**TIP FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS: CONSIDER YOUR ALTERNATIVES**

You never are obligated to give an interview. Public institutions are obligated to provide information, but this can be presented in the form of a prepared statement.

In a no-win situation, there are advantages to this approach, including that the information is presented in a concise manner, that you are not stating more than you want to or legally are required to say and that it is unlikely you will be misquoted.

Handle bad news with caution — and weigh the advantages versus the disadvantages before granting an interview. Assume there will be a story whether you cooperate or not. It is likely that you have lessened the “news value” of the story because you have limited the information. This is particularly true for television, as you have not provided the live interview that is key to a lead story.

**TIP FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS: IF YOU CAN'T COMMENT, SAY WHY**

Keep in mind that a “no comment” or an “unavailable for comment” often makes you look worse. It’s better to explain *why* you can’t respond (e.g. patient privacy, your data analysis isn’t finished, because of licensing arrangements with private companies).

- Answer: Patient privacy prevents me from commenting on that.
- Answer: I haven’t seen the story/paper/study to which you’re referring, so I’m unable to comment.

**Your Relationship with the Media**

Build relationships with the media over time. A crisis is *not* the time to initiate a relationship. It is the time to contact those with whom you have cultivated a relationship. Make contacts with television, radio and print journalists, newspaper editors and editorial page directors well in advance.

The public relations representative acts as the liaison between the media and the spokesperson from each department. The public relations staff serves as an important resource for research spokespeople and can brief them on specific reporters, media program formats and policies. Researchers and all staff always should speak with the public relations representative before *any* contact with the media.

**SOME POINTERS FOR APPROACHING THE MEDIA**

- Merchandise good media in all press releases/conferences regarding new medical advances. Emphasize the role of animal research in this new discovery.
- Analyze the local and state media to determine who is writing about biomedical research and what they are saying. Make contact with these individuals before a crisis occurs and cultivate these contacts by providing access to information and spokespeople.
- In order to sell news, you have to know the media market and the style and audience of the news media outlets. What’s interesting for newspapers is not necessarily appealing for TV or radio, as they are classic rivals.
- When you have something newsworthy, suggest to your public relations office that it contact a specific reporter and note that he or she was recommended by you.
- Get to know reporters, news editors and opinion editors. Find out what different newspapers’ policies are for submitting letters to the editors or opinion essays.
- Brief reporters — as a single institution or as part of a local or state consortium — on the kinds of ongoing research that use animals and apprise them of the threat to progress by animal rights activists. Should you become a target of the animal rights movement, their support, through editorials and unbiased news coverage, can be invaluable. This is in addition to the important background information you already have provided.
- News is what’s different or what people need to know because it affects their lives. Unfortunately, given the choice between a fire and a press conference, the media will choose the fire.
- Work with your public relations/communications department and NCABR to place articles in the television, radio and print media on “warm” topics, or “good news.”
- Focus on newspapers first; radio reporters often will read right out of newspapers, and television news gets many of its ideas from newspapers.

- Offer to provide background information on a variety of topics for a reporter — to be his or her “personal guide” through the scientific maze.
- Look for ways to demonstrate your understanding of a complex issue by deciphering it into lay language that ordinary people can understand. This helps make the reporter look good and makes his or her job easier.
- Look for opportunities to provide the local angle to a national issue/emerging story. If you relate them to a specific person, that’s even better.
- Look for ways to bring journalists into your circle to make them personally aware of your work.
- Don’t push too hard. It takes time to cultivate relationships.
- In announcements about new drug developments and research breakthroughs, highlight the contribution of animal research. By keeping the importance of the humane use of animals in biomedical research in the news, both journalists and the public will be more comfortable with the idea of animal research when a crisis strikes.
- Emphasize the benefits of animal research on animal health.

#### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: ANOTHER WAY TO REACH THE PUBLIC**

Write letters to the editor that highlight the benefits of animal research whenever the newspaper carries negative stories about research. Write letters thanking the newspaper and praising its efforts to keep the public well-informed of the issues when positive stories appear.

Just as a letter sent directly to your elected official can have tremendous impact, so can a letter to the editor published in your local or state newspaper. Elected officials, their staffs and other influential readers examine these pages every day to gauge constituent sentiment in their home district. A letter to the editor is an especially effective communication tool because it ensures useful media coverage of the points you believe are most important, in your own words.

Here’s how to write an effective letter to the editor:

- Determine and comply with the newspaper’s requirements for considering letters. These might include typing the letter in a double-spaced format and limiting it to a certain length.
- Write as a concerned, informed citizen rather than as a company employee.
- Add something new to the debate instead of repeating what others already have said.
- Avoid emotion.
- Get to the point quickly.
- Support your assertions with facts.
- Make your own case rather than refuting someone else’s.
- Outline concisely the legislative or regulatory action you believe needs to be taken.
- Explain how the public will benefit from your position.
- Identify any special expertise you bring to the issue (as a scientist or physician studying/treating a medical condition in which progress would be impeded if such legislation is passed).
- Sign your name, give your home address, phone number and e-mail address and offer to discuss the letter with the editor if he or she has questions.

By using any of these strategies, you can keep the public informed about the issues surrounding the humane use of animals in biomedical research.

#### **WORKING WITH THE MEDIA**

Consider inviting key members of the media into your institution's animal research facilities in a controlled situation. Don't allow a reporter, with or without a camera, to tour the facility without an escort who can discuss the purpose of the research, the policies and procedures of the institution and the care and treatment of the animals.

While there is no obligation to provide media access to certain areas, it is in the facility's best interest to dispel the frequent allegation that "animal abuse atrocities occur behind closed doors in all research centers."

The best strategy is to attempt to accommodate the media's need for visuals without compromising vital research projects. Allow media access to animal facilities on your terms.

- Provide an orientation before reporters go through the facility to prepare them for what they are about to see.
- Tour the facility yourself before the media arrives to ensure everything is in order.
- Alert staff that the media will be on site. Ask for their cooperation in presenting the most professional image of the facility and its staff.
- Consider requests to film or take photographs in your facility carefully. The intense light of video cameras and flashes will cause animals to appear frightened. Additionally, photographs — like sound bites — may be used out of context.
- Determine boundaries for media visits within your facility.
- Which facility locations can be photographed or filmed?
- Which animal species can be photographed or filmed?
- Which areas should not be photographed or filmed?
- Who will escort the media to the designated areas?

#### **TIPS FROM JOURNALISTS**

- Scientists need to be trained to work with the media.
- Scientists are reluctant to deal with the media because of fear, because they suspect intellectual dishonesty and/or because they lack familiarity with the rules.
- The media covers events, not ideas.
- "A softball response will not work in a hardball game."
- Be honest about emotions in dealing with animals.
- Convey researchers as humans: caring about animals, having their own pets and concerned about doing procedures that may cause pain or distress for animals.
- Draw distinctions between animal welfare and animal rights.
- Respond to ethical and moral issues.
- Address emotional component but also have statistics ready.



## Public Outreach: Children/Students

Note: Additional information on this topic is available from NCABR online ([ncabr.org/resources/communityoutreach.html](http://ncabr.org/resources/communityoutreach.html)).

School-age students (K–12) may be the most important audience you ever will address. They are eager to learn more about you and your work as a representative of the medical and scientific community. Additionally, teachers welcome the opportunity to have professionals come into the classroom to discuss new developments in science and in medical research.

Unfortunately, there are increasing efforts by certain groups to eliminate the use of animals in medical research and in classroom teaching. These negative influences have begun to turn many students away from interest in the life sciences.

Students at all levels are being encouraged to take a position on these issues without being fully informed. Moreover, those opposed to animal use in research and teaching often also have strong convictions about eliminating animals for food, clothing and entertainment. These groups appeal to the emotional side of impressionable young children and teenagers. Consequently, many students graduate from high school today with a lack of appreciation for science in general, and particularly for medical research.

Animal rights groups actively are engaged in recruiting students by sending newsletters, such as *PETA Kids*, to the schools, developing viral video and other Internet-related campaigns, organizing animal rights clubs and giving classroom presentations.

To reverse this trend, members of the research community should volunteer to become active in public outreach and educational programs to educate students. Education about biomedical research is the vaccination against the next generation of animal rights activities.

When working with students, you may be asked to participate as one of the following:

- Guest speaker in a classroom
- Speaker at your child's career day
- Participant in a school-sponsored debate
- Provider of materials about biomedical research in your workplace on "Take Your Child to Work" days

Your role in the classroom would be to help the students do the following:

- Understand the importance of the humane use of animals in biomedical research
- Discover the benefits and vital role of science and medical research
- Lay the foundation for careers in science and technology
- See scientists and medical professionals as real people who care about their work and their animals
- Gain an appreciation for and understanding of what scientists do
- Learn the facts and dispel the many myths about animal research
- Learn about veterinary care and the rules governing the use of animals

Surveys and focus groups indicate students typically have the following questions:

- How many and what kinds of animals do you use for research?
- Are the animals hurt or tortured?
- What happens when you are done with the animals?
- Do you really take care of the animals after you hurt them?
- Do you think it is wrong to use animals in research?
- Do animals feel pain when or if they die?
- If an animal is cured, how do you know the medicine will work as well on humans?
- Why use animals for cosmetic testing?
- Can't you use a computer? It's almost the same thing.
- Do you think it's right to hurt animals to save humans?

### **Preparation for Effective Classroom Presentations**

Students learn best when they are encouraged to relate their own experiences. The basis for any effective presentation is to allow students to make connections between what they already know and new ideas you are presenting. To accomplish this, try the following:

Let them talk about what they know.

- Allow them to think out loud.
- Permit them to ask questions.
- Let them share experiences and bounce ideas around in small groups.
- A final piece of advice: **A LECTURE WILL NOT WORK FOR THEM OR FOR YOU.**

**True or False Student Test****THE USE OF ANIMALS IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH**

1. People and animals benefit from animal research. **TRUE**
2. The animals most commonly used for research are cats and dogs. **FALSE**
3. Scientists must follow strict rules and guidelines to use animals in research. **TRUE**
4. Laboratory animals suffer pain and distress. **FALSE**
5. Most laboratory animals are from pounds and animal shelters and might be missing pets. **FALSE**
6. People are not used as subjects for medical research. **TRUE**
7. Researchers care about the animals they use in their research. **TRUE**
8. Specially trained individuals work in research laboratories specifically to care for the animals. **TRUE**
9. Research with animals has produced many medical advances that would not have been achieved otherwise. **TRUE**
10. Most animal research is unnecessary. The same things could be learned by using computers or other nonanimal methods. **FALSE**

**Know Your Audience****GRADES K-3 (5-9 YEARS OLD)**

- Curious about the world around them
- Eager to learn
- Rapid shift of interest/10-minute attention span
- Boundless energy
- Remember and only can follow one or two directions at a time
- Can't understand abstract ideas and reason with concrete things
- "Me"-centered
- Highly impressionable

**GRADES 4-6 (10-12 YEARS OLD)**

- Interested in concrete things (things they know)
- Like puzzles and challenges
- 20-minute attention span
- Will work in groups
- Can formulate ideas
- Will classify items

**GRADES 7-8 (13-14 YEARS OLD)**

- Self-conscious, try to be "cool" but may appear aloof
- Want peer approval
- Inquisitive, but may challenge authority
- Can understand some abstract concepts
- Can be restless (need activity-oriented materials)
- Make jokes or put-downs to save face

**GRADES 9–12 (15–18 YEARS OLD)**

- On the verge of becoming adults
- Able to think in abstract terms
- Can carry on discussions
- Ready to explore careers
- Important to have others think well of them
- May need some prodding to respond to questions

**Tips for Presenting to Students**

- Bring lots of visual aids and props.
- Do a simple experiment (observe, classify, measure) to involve them.
- Summarize your talk and give students a few items to remember.
- Allow time for a question-and-answer period.
- Use language that is simple and define words that students may not know.
- Leave materials with students or give them assignments.
- Enjoy yourself and show enthusiasm.

**Suggestions for Classroom Management**

- Make eye contact with the students; they enjoy the attention.
- Organize all materials in advance. Students don't like to wait.
- Use student volunteers to help distribute materials; they like to feel important.
- Request that students raise their hands to participate or else they might all talk at once.
- Practice good safety measures. Children learn by following role models.
- Praise attentive and helpful behavior because this is the behavior you want to encourage.
- Stop and wait for students to let you continue speaking if they become noisy. They probably have heard the "silence method" before and know it means they should be quiet.

**Ways to Get Involved**

- Contact the principal or a teacher and offer to speak to students. Explain why you are interested in speaking. Think about which grade level you would like to address.
- Use your family or the students you know to help arrange visits.
- Identify and contact heads of science departments within each school district.
- Contact the Parent-Teacher Association presidents and offer to make classroom presentations.
- Contact school librarians.

## Public Outreach: Adults

Note: Additional information on this topic is available from NCABR online ([ncabr.org/resources/communityoutreach.html](http://ncabr.org/resources/communityoutreach.html)).

By speaking at public gatherings, research scientists can have a profound impact on the attitude of the public about science. Scientists can help improve science literacy by explaining what they do, why they do it and how their work benefits human and animal health.

The use of animals in biomedical research is not well understood by many lay people, despite their support of this research through tax dollars and contributions to voluntary health associations and organizations.

The animal rights movement, which seeks to abolish animal experimentation, has exploited this gap (or lack of understanding) to influence public opinion against animal research. The animal rights movement effectively has established some widely accepted misconceptions of biomedical research, including the following:

- Most biomedical research is unnecessary or repetitive.
- Nonanimal methods could replace most animal research if scientists chose to use them.
- Research funds can and should be channeled into the development of new nonanimal methods.
- Animals suffer pain and distress in research.
- There are no laws or regulations protecting animals used in biomedical research.
- Pet animals often are stolen and sold for research purposes.
- Researchers are indifferent to the well-being of laboratory animals.

Consult page 86 (*Frequently Asked Questions*) for more information.

### Insight Into Your Audience

Opinion research shows that many Americans are confused about animal experimentation, why it is needed and how it is conducted. Misinformation about animal research, along with strong emotions, fuels the animal rights movement in the United States.

The public — including many of those who concede the necessity for animal research — often questions the motives and behavior of this research. Many people feel that biomedical research is shrouded in mystery and that researchers are not held accountable for the time and money they spend on investigations. Still more serious is the perception that scientists pad or stretch out projects simply to obtain grant money. According to this reasoning, scientists may be experimenting on an excessive number of animals for no good purpose.

Often, the layperson has difficulty grasping why research is repeated. This is one of the main factors fueling the animal rights movement's attack on so-called unnecessary research. It is likely that attitudes will change if people understand the need to verify research, to amplify existing knowledge and to improve diagnostic and therapeutic techniques.

Another prevalent belief is that many researchers are insensitive to the needs of laboratory animals. People are not convinced that researchers are doing all they can to minimize pain and suffering of laboratory animals. Many people are not aware that a staff of veterinarians and animal care technicians have the duty and responsibility for the care of laboratory animals.

Even though some people know that rats and mice constitute the majority of laboratory animals used each year, they often cite pounds and shelters as the primary source of research animals. This indicates the high level of emotional concern about dogs and cats used in research. Thus, while it is essential to stress that the majority of laboratory animals are rodents, it is equally important to explain the need for a small number of other animals, such as dogs and cats, for some types of research. See page 79 for statistics (*Statistics About Animals in Research*).

Keep in mind that most people think science is difficult to understand. They respond best when science and research are discussed in terms of the health and well-being of people like themselves and their families. Drawing parallels between biomedical research and advances in medicine is the best way to capture the interest of a general audience and broaden understanding.

### **Tips for Effective Public Speaking**

Unless you're an accomplished speaker, you should depend upon a basic text that can be altered for each situation. However, look upon that text only as a guide to structure your speech and organize the examples you will use. Speak from notes if you must, but never read your speech.

#### **PREPARING TO MAKE A PRESENTATION**

- Tailor your speech to the interests of your audience. A campus student group might be most interested in the policy of its university on the care and use of animals, while the local Rotary Club might want to hear how animal research has affected diseases that commonly strike the adult population.
- Rehearse your material aloud. Test it on friends, family or colleagues who can give you constructive criticism from a nonscientific point of view.
- Learn your concepts and structure so you can "tell" your information. Don't memorize your speech.
- Relax, breathe deeply and exhale slowly for about one minute before you are introduced.

#### **MAKING YOUR PRESENTATION**

- Speak slowly. Give the audience time to digest what you are saying. Remind yourself to slow down by putting slash marks between sentences in practice sessions.
- Before beginning to speak, smile at the audience to establish rapport.
- Stand with your weight on both feet.
- Speak loudly enough to be heard easily, but don't shout. Speaking from the diaphragm, not the throat, will help you project with less vocal strain.

- Make a preliminary remark before going into your planned beginning. You might comment on some aspect of the occasion or on a remark made by the program's host — or just say, "I'm delighted to be here."
- Establish empathy with your audience. Let them know you are human through an anecdote.
- Use vocal variety. Let your voice and your delivery reflect the full spectrum of emotions and points of emphasis contained in your presentation.
- Use gestures that complement the expression of your ideas. Avoid distracting, meaningless movements.
- Consider your speech an "enlarged conversation" and speak as naturally as you would to one other person.
- Maintain eye contact with listeners throughout the presentation. If the group is very large, look at listeners in a section-by-section manner.
- Let your enthusiasm for your work come through. People can appreciate and respond to professional dedication even when they cannot truly understand the subject of a scientist's research.

#### WHAT TO SAY AND HOW TO SAY IT

- Your speech should have an introduction, body (key points) and conclusion. Remember the clarity principle: Every generalization should be followed by a specific example or statement.
- Know your purpose. The introduction will orient listeners to that purpose and motivate them to listen.
- An audience member should be able to answer these questions after hearing your introduction: "How is this information relevant to me?" and "Why should I bother listening?" Be sure to help your audience understand why your topic is relevant to them — especially if you are talking about a highly technical area of research. Tell them what the ultimate impact of the research is.
- The body of your talk should be organized into meaningful groupings, with all key and subordinate points related to your purpose.
- Support your points with facts or anecdotes from your experience.
- Don't use too many facts and numbers — they numb people. Better to use anecdotes and human examples to illustrate a few numbers.
- The conclusion should redirect audience attention to your purpose.
- Make your appeal. If you want your audience to do something, tell them what to do.
- Remember, the average American has an eighth-grade science education. While this may not be true of all groups you address, speak simply and concisely for best communication. It is an opportunity to improve your audience's scientific literacy.
- Provide examples.

**RESPONDING TO AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

- If you are challenged on a statement (such as the necessity of using research animals), you can do much to defuse the situation by acknowledging respect for another's beliefs and values and by framing your statements as "I" messages.
- Never say "you're wrong" if it is clear someone in your audience is making statements based on misinformation. A good way to respond is to ask, "May I tell you something more about that?"
- Asking permission to convey the facts is more likely to induce the person to listen.

**PROPS, VISUAL AIDS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

- Visual aids should be used only if they significantly enhance your presentation. Don't feel you have to use slides or overheads, especially if your material lacks pizzazz. With a nonscientific audience, good eye contact and body language that conveys your enthusiasm for your work can be more instructive and memorable than most slides.
- If you do use slides or other audiovisual aids, don't let their content dictate the course of your presentation. Decide what you want to say, then use the slides to illustrate certain points.
- Nothing is deadlier for a nonscientific audience than a speaker droning repeatedly, "And this slide shows...."
- Consider other types of illustrative material that might enhance your presentation (e.g. a piece of equipment, an artifact, a working model for the system about which you are speaking).
- Information on the visual aid should be to the point, easy-to-interpret and interesting.
- Slides and overhead transparencies need to be kept simple: no more than four words per line and four lines per page or slide. The type needs to be large enough to be read from the back of the room. It is better to exclude items with smaller type than to use them and lose your audience because they cannot see the material to which you are referring.
- Most slides for scientific audiences are far too complex for the lay public. Don't use a visual of a chart or graph unless it can be quickly understood by a nonscientist.
- During the time you are using slides or overhead transparencies, try to have the room lights dimmed but not turned completely off. Then, during your presentation, refer and perhaps point to the visuals on the screen, but face your audience as much as possible and maintain some eye contact with them. Don't talk to the screen.
- In most instances, handout materials should be distributed only at the end of your presentation. This prevents listeners from reading while you are talking.



**HOW TO HANDLE A DEBATE**

You may be invited to participate in a panel discussion or debate with animal rights activists. Decline such invitations until you feel comfortable handling them. If you do encounter vocal opposition, the following suggestions should get you through a confrontation:

- Remember you are representing reason. No matter how great the provocation, control your temper. When your opponents rant and rave, you will win points for your restraint.
- Debate about the issue of the humane use of animals in biomedical research often is not polite. You must be able to hold the floor despite attempts to interrupt you. Raise your voice slightly to override the interruption as you continue to speak. Use body language to assert your authority. Keep your head up and look directly at your opponent in an assertive way. Lean forward and put out your hand as though motioning “stop.”
- Refer to page 86 (*Frequently Asked Questions*) for appropriate responses to controversial questions.

The following techniques also work when you want to interrupt a stream of misinformation. When you have difficulty getting a word in edgewise, make a general plea by saying “I’d like to address that point.” Then, plunge right in, keeping these tips in mind:

- You are unlikely to convert your antagonist, so direct your energies to convincing the audience.
- Stick to a few basic points that you wish to communicate, such as the necessity for animal research in the past, present and future, and why it is so important.
- Animal rights activists will try to bury you in irrelevant details and misinformation. If you establish your own agenda, you’ll be effective.

**RESPONDING TO AUDIENCE QUESTIONS**

- There are two ways to set up a question-and-answer session following a presentation:
  - » If time is limited, you may wish to have audience members write their questions on index cards to be passed to you when you’ve finished speaking. Either you or someone you designate can screen the cards, selecting those you want to answer.
  - » An open session is more difficult to control but may be more satisfying to your audience. After you acknowledge an audience member, repeat his or her question to be sure everyone has heard it (and to give yourself time to formulate an answer).
- You should anticipate many questions. Write out expected questions and your answers before your presentation. The session will be more interesting if you can introduce some new information in your responses.
- Again, body language is important. Don’t cling to furniture or cross your arms tightly; you want to convey an air of openness and accessibility. Even if a question is irrelevant, appear to be concerned about what the person has to say. Look at the entire audience to maintain contact when responding. If the same question is asked more than once, patiently answer it again.
- When someone asks several questions at once, you are free to choose the one you would like to answer and ignore the others.

- If the question is one you would rather not answer directly, use it to lead into a point you *do* want to make.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. But cite a possible source of the information or offer to get the information for the questioner.
- Always finish on a high note. Don't keep answering questions when audience interest seems to have waned. You can invite those who have unanswered questions to speak to you privately at the conclusion of the program.

## Public Outreach: Legislators and Public Officials

Note: Additional information on this topic is available from NCABR online ([ncabr.org/resources/govtrelations.html](http://ncabr.org/resources/govtrelations.html)).

NCABR monitors municipal ballot initiatives, federal, state and local legislation and various legal actions pertaining to the use of animals in research.

NCABR encourages individuals in the scientific community to contact their elected officials and make their voices heard on the vital necessity of the humane use of animals in biomedical research. The importance of scientists' participation in the legislative process cannot be stressed enough. Animal rights groups are one of the most powerful grassroots lobbying forces in the country, sending hundreds of thousands of letters with an anti-science message to members of Congress each year. As a member of the scientific community, your voice is needed vitally on Capitol Hill and at the state level, in Raleigh, to combat the misinformation campaigns of radical animal rights activists. By speaking up, you can make a difference! Elected officials want to do a good job representing the interests and views of those they were elected to serve. They value the input of informed and concerned constituents, especially scientists and physicians.

### Getting to Know Your Elected Officials

The following tips will help you communicate more effectively with your elected officials, whether by letter, by phone or in person. Using these guidelines, you can enlist the assistance of your legislator to better inform the community about the importance of the humane use of animals in biomedical research and to ensure continued support for this important research.

- Communicate with your elected officials through occasional visits, calls and letters.
- Encourage your institution or company to invite elected officials who represent the district or state in which your facility is located to visit.
- Attend candidate meetings during elections and introduce yourself.
- Participate in your legislator's town meetings.
- Make yourself an information source by providing your officials with current facts about your industry.
- Work on the campaigns of candidates whose views are closest to your own.
- Contribute money to your chosen candidates and volunteer to serve on the campaign finance committee.
- Regularly ask, "How can I help?"

Whether you communicate by letter, by e-mail, by phone or in person, keep your two primary goals in mind:

1. To influence your legislator's decision on a specific piece of legislation
2. To build a relationship with your legislator that will make you a valued source of information on important issues, both now and in the future

**SUGGESTIONS FOR GRASSROOTS COMMUNICATION WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS**

- Always:
  - » Thank the legislator for considering your views.
  - » Express your opinion clearly and concisely.
  - » Tell your legislator specifically what you want.
  - » Ask for his or her support on the issue.
  - » Thank the legislator again for spending time with you and indicate there may be other issues you will want to raise with him or her at another time.
- Never:
  - » Express views that are excessively ideological or narrow.
  - » Confront or threaten the legislator.
  - » Behave arrogantly.
  - » Overwhelm the legislator with technical detail.
  - » Misinform the legislator.

**Addresses and Salutations for Elected Officials**

**PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

President [Full Name]  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

**UNITED STATES SENATOR**

The Honorable [Full Name]  
[Room #] [Name] Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator [Last Name]:

**UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE**

The Honorable [Full Name]  
[Room #] [Name] House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative [Last Name]:

**GOVERNOR**

The Honorable [Full Name]  
Office of the Governor  
20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699–0301

Dear Governor [Last Name]:

**STATE SENATOR**

The Honorable [Full Name]  
North Carolina Senate  
North Carolina General Assembly  
Raleigh, NC 27601–1096

Dear Senator [Last Name]:

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

The Honorable [Full Name]  
North Carolina House of Representatives  
North Carolina General Assembly  
Raleigh, NC 27601–1096

Dear Representative [Last Name]:

Note: You can locate your elected officials online, at:

- [senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](https://senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm) (for U.S. senators)
- [house.gov/house/memberwww.shtml](https://house.gov/house/memberwww.shtml) (for U.S. representatives)
- [ncleg.net](https://ncleg.net) (for state legislators)

**Tips for Composing an Effective Letter to an Elected Official**

- Write as a constituent, using your home address and personal stationery.
- Identify your subject clearly (describe the legislation about which you are concerned and identify it by bill number, if possible).
- Stick to one issue in each letter.
- Be brief (one-page maximum).
- Stress the public benefits or harm that will result from the legislation you are discussing.
- Emphasize how the legislator’s constituency will be affected by the legislation.
- Support your position with facts.
- Avoid angry or abusive comments and never threaten to retaliate at the polls.
- Point out how your background and experience make you an authority on this matter.
- Avoid jargon and technical details.
- Ask the legislator to support your position.

- If you don't get a reply or if you get one that is unsatisfactory, write again or call.
- If the legislator votes your way, write or call to say "thanks." If he or she doesn't vote with you, send a note of thanks for considering your position. Either way, the official will know you're watching.

### **Tips for Calling Your Legislator**

- A phone call can be a very effective way to communicate with an elected official. Follow the general approach outlined on page 74 (*Tips for Composing an Effective Letter to an Elected Official*) and make sure you ask for the legislator's support.
- Your federal legislators have offices in both Washington, D.C., and the district they represent. Similarly, state legislators have offices in both the state capital and the local district. To determine the names of your elected legislators, you can contact the public library, the local Democratic and Republican party offices or the local League of Women Voters, or you can consult the links on page 73 (*Addresses and Salutations for Elected Officials*).
- To reach members of Congress by phone, call the U.S. Capitol switchboard, at 202.224.3121, and ask for the member by name. The operator will transfer you to the legislator's office. You also can locate legislators' phone numbers, e-mail addresses and mailing addresses via the Internet.
- It is important to realize elected officials have tremendously busy schedules and rely heavily on staff members to gather much of their information. If the legislator is unavailable, ask to speak to the aide handling your issue. Explain your views to the aide carefully, ask that they be presented to the legislator and ask for a response.
- Never regard a discussion with an aide as a waste of time. On the contrary, developing a working relationship with an aide can be an important springboard to direct contact with your legislator.
- Always follow up your call with a brief letter thanking the official and the staff member by name for their time and interest. Use this letter as an opportunity to restate your position.

### **Tips for Making a Visit**

- Meeting with a member of Congress or with one of his or her staff members is an important way to pass along information about a specific piece of legislation or concern.
- Try to meet your legislator in the home district, rather than in the state capital or Washington, D.C., whenever possible. He or she visits the home district regularly to keep in touch, and there are fewer distractions.
- Call the legislator's office and identify yourself as a constituent or by whom you represent. Explain to the staff person who takes your request the nature of your concern and indicate that you would like to arrange a brief meeting with the legislator. If the legislator's calendar is full, ask if he or she will be available in the near future. If the legislator is not able to meet with you before he or she votes on your issue, ask to meet with the staff person who is handling the issue or is most familiar with it.
- If a meeting can be arranged, send a brief written communication to the scheduler confirming the specifics of the meeting, including the date, time, location and topic for discussion. To prepare for the meeting, follow the steps outlined on page 74 (*Tips for Composing an Effective Letter to a Public Official*).

- Prepare a one-page summary of the issue you wish to discuss and the arguments in your favor. Leave this material behind after your visit. Legislators are required to take positions on many different issues. In some instances, a legislator may lack important details about the pros and cons of a particular matter. Therefore, it is helpful to share with the legislator information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact or benefits associated with a particular issue or piece of legislation.
- Be punctual and patient. It is not uncommon for legislators to be late or to be interrupted.
- Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information in the event the legislator expresses interest or asks questions.
- After the meeting, send a brief thank you letter including the different points discussed and the date, time and location of the meeting.