Covid-19: 10 Communications Principles for Reporting on Covid-19 Vaccines.

01. Manage expectations.

Vaccines are a powerful tool in the fight to overcome the pandemic, alongside masks, distancing and treatments. However, mismanaging public expectations will only lead to distrust as and when negative news stories surface.

SAY: 'Vaccines are a major part of the solution, but they are not the only solution'

02. Remember vaccination is a social norm.

Vaccination has been helping societies manage and eradicate diseases for decades. Without vaccines, we would be exposed to many more life-threatening illnesses. Acceptance of vaccination is still very much the norm, and people make decisions based on what others do, so it's important to reflect this position accurately.

SAY: 'Thankfully, we can all take a vaccine to help overcome Covid-19'
NOT: 'Some people aren't convinced about a vaccine'

03. Understand genuine concerns.

To help people trust vaccination and speed uptake, we need to recognise legitimate concerns and respond appropriately. Most legitimate concerns can often be addressed by communicating the science effectively and providing people with accurate information.

SAY: 'It's natural to have concerns and to want to understand how the vaccines have been developed and how they work' ...then direct people to our vaccine explanation hub at: wellcome.org/Covid-19Vaccines

04. Beware the implications of 'false balance'.

We need to avoid giving a platform to or bolstering unfounded viewpoints and disinformation. A small minority of people are anti-vaccination, so we need to be wary of providing a platform for them to push their agenda.

05. Avoid triggering fear or shame.

This can elicit negative responses and make people less likely to engage with the science in a rational way. Unsettling and worrying times put a huge strain on people's mental health, so speak with compassion.

AVOID: 'Denigrating anyone who's hesitant about vaccines, as they MAY just need more clarity on what is happening and why."

For more information visit
wellcome.org/Covid-19Vaccines
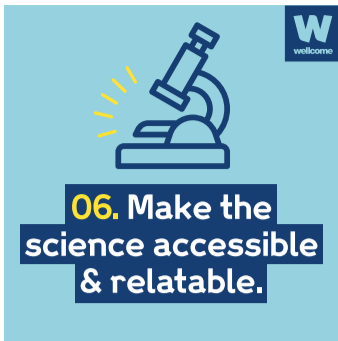
06. Make the science accessible and relatable.

Humanised stories and simple, jargon free science from trusted sources work best. Research shows that when it comes to trust, healthcare workers rank highest with the public. Analogies can be a simple and effective way to help communicate the science.

EXAMPLE: 'A vaccine is a bit like wearing a shield. The more effective it is, the better, but even a partial shield is better than no shield at all."

## 07. Be sensitive to vested interests.

The public is highly sensitive to where information comes from and the interests of the people behind it. Respect this and provide multiple, unbiased sources wherever possible.

08. Verify with experts and report data.

Be transparent with sources and ask if you need experts. Wellcome has experts available to support, as well as a network of scientists and specialists it can put you in touch with. Get in touch: vaccines@wellcome.org.
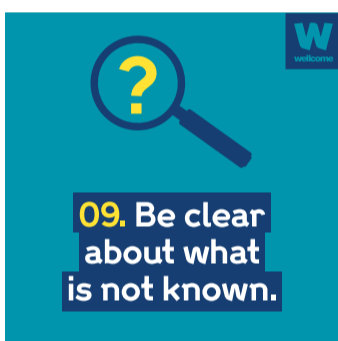
09. Be clear about what is not known.

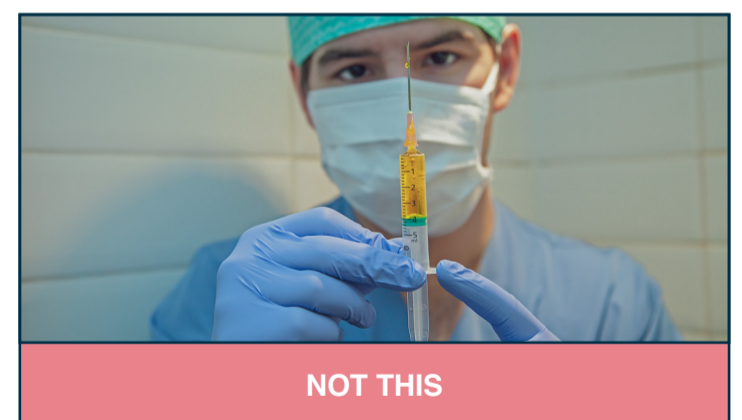**Honesty builds trust.** It's as important to be clear about what is not known, as what is.

10. Consider Imagery.

Build positive associations and avoid triggering anxiety through visuals.
It helps for people to see real people like them, or people they trust, taking a vaccine.

THIS

NOT THIS

More about this series

For a full version of the '10 Principles of Vaccine Communications' visit the Wellcome Trust Covid-19 Vaccines information hub at: **wellcome.org/Covid-19Vaccines**

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wellcome.org/Covid-19Vaccines