

MODULE 3: DETERMINE FORMAT



From Research Insights to Community Impact: A DISSEMINATION TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH TEAMS

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This module may be of special interest to those representing:

 **Community**

 **Team Leads**

This module is part of a larger resource, “From Research Insights to Community Impact: A Dissemination Toolkit for Community-Engaged Research Teams.”



Scan the QR code
to access the full toolkit.

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MODULE 3: DETERMINE FORMAT

Module 3 provides a strategy you can use to decide which format best tells your research story to your intended audiences.

Rhetorical Situation

This section focuses on actual examples of dissemination products, both community and academic, that may suit the stories your team chooses to frame for specific audiences.

When you want to understand which dissemination products are right for the stories you choose, apply a strategy called the [rhetorical situation](#).^{*} When you define the rhetorical situation of a product, you are working to explain how the outside context and environment shape the product and how readers view and understand it.

To define the rhetorical situation for your dissemination product, answer the following:

Purpose:

Why are you writing — what do you hope the reader will do/think/decide as a result of reading the text?

Writer:

What is your motivation for writing?
What do you bring to the writing situation?

HELPFUL TIP

It is not necessary to use terms like the “rhetorical situation” to address your writing team. Rather, you can intentionally choose products to co-create by addressing the stated five parts: purpose, writer, message, audience, and context.

Message:

What is the main idea of your document?
How should you communicate the information?
What is the appropriate tone?

Audience:

Who are your primary and secondary audiences?
(This is the most critical part of the writing process.)

Context:

What is the situation that creates the need for the writing? How is the document influenced by timing, location, current events, and culture?

Below is an example of how to use the rhetorical situation as a tool to identify how a medium has been customized for a specific situation. Read the graphic to follow along with the explanations.

Purpose: Provide researchers with recommendations for meaningfully acknowledging research participants for their contributions to research projects.

Writer: The Community Engagement Alliance Consultative Resource (CEACR) developed [a tip sheet](#) to provide researchers with promising practices for showing appreciation and recognition to research participants.

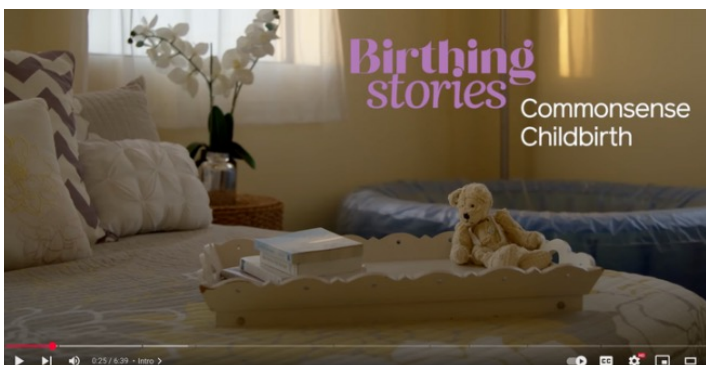
Message: Uses a visual medium to capture attention and a depiction of a participant to humanize the graphic. Uses plain language and short, bite-sized tips for digestibility.

Audience: Community-engaged researchers and teams.



Video: [Birthing Stories: Commonsense Childbirth*](#)

Use the rhetorical situation as a tool to ask the right questions about this medium. Try to answer the following questions about the video.



Purpose: What does the creator hope the audience will do/think/decide?

Writer: How does the creator’s background contribute to this?

Message: What’s the tone? How is the message being delivered?

Audience: Who is the intended audience? How do we make sure that audience watches it?

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

From your research, what story could you tell using videos? Why would a video be the most appropriate medium for that story? How does your video advance social change?



Please explore the rhetorical situation of each example by completing the chart.

Rhetorical Situation Parts	What does the example tell you about the following parts? What do you discover about the example from these different perspectives?
Purpose	
Writer	
Message	
Audience	
Context	

For each of these examples, please explore the rhetorical situation using the chart on the previous page.





Invited Commentary: [Navigating the Tensions of Community Engagement Evaluation*](#)

Traditionally, evaluation is approached as a systematic process focusing mostly on accuracy and alignment. Programs are assessed for their fidelity to the plan and their success in producing predetermined outcomes (CDC, 2013). Perhaps the most common tool for defining the targets of evaluation in this approach is a logic model (Lowery et al., 2006; Mrklas et al., 2023; Mrklas et al., 2022; Phipps et al., 2016). Logic models essentially map the momentum of community engagement in terms of inputs and processes that evolve into outcomes and impacts, and their wide use came about in part through advocacy from the United Way, the CDC, and other funding agencies (Frechtling, 2007). This approach has many advocates who argue that developing a logic model supports planning, project management, and communication as well as evaluation (Frechtling, 2007; Mills et al., 2019).

Lessons Learned: [Improving the Lives of People with Sickle Cell Disease*](#)

Improving the Lives of People with Sickle Cell Disease:

Community Organizations and Epidemiologists Working Together

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Abstract

Background: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Sickle Cell Data Collection (SCDC) program comprises multidisciplinary teams, which include community-based organizations. Partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) is a novel approach to ensure that SCDC data are actionable.

Objective: To better understand areas for mutual capacity building, we explored the relationships and dynamics between CBO and data teams within the SCDC program in 10 states.

Methods: We conducted semi-structured interviews with CBO ($n = 13$) and SCDC ($n = 10$) participants and then categorized and compared text from each interview and across states. Six themes emerged.

Lessons Learned: Transparency and trust are essential. Early CBO engagement and leadership are needed for trust and agreed upon priorities.

Conclusions: Participants contextualized trust, the most prominent theme, within discussions of racism and health inequities. Relationships between the CBO and data teams bring hard data and human experience together for advocacy, education, improved care, and a platform for the SCD voice.

Based on your intended audience, you have the power to choose the stories and format that best connect with them.

This is a form of **narrative framing**, or telling stories to share certain messages or draw out certain emotions. The stories that we tell emerge from the data that we collect and analyze.

For example, if we only collect data on the foods people eat, and not about their level of access to food, we may create a narrative that shames people for their food choices (a deficit narrative) rather than uplifting solutions that help overcome barriers to nutrition.



REFLECTIVE QUESTION

What can you do to showcase community strengths in your collaborative writing process?

“If we tell deficit stories, we’re going to have a deficit narrative that will drive deficit policies and deficit feelings in people who are characterized very narrowly.”

— *Dr. Alonzo Plough, chief science officer and vice president of Research-Evaluation-Learning at Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*



ABOUT CEACR:

The Community Engagement Alliance Consultative Resource (CEACR) serves as a channel for community-engaged best practices to research teams wanting to apply principles of community-engaged approaches to address differences in health outcomes and encourage participation in research programs. For more information, please visit nihceal.org.

We Value Your Feedback!



Please scan this QR code* to tell us your initial thoughts about the toolkit.

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