

This workshop can accommodate 16 or 32 participants, with 3 or 6 instructors, respectively.

Day 1: The Fundamentals

8:00 - 8:30 am: Breakfast and Check-in

8:30 - 10:00am: Opening Plenary, unlimited participants

This interactive session introduces participants to general principles in how to craft short, clear, conversational statements, intelligible to non-scientists, about what you do and why it matters. The session consists of an interactive presentation and discussion on interpreting technical material using examples and analogies to illuminate unfamiliar concepts to your audience. The plenary will address problems and solutions in public interactions as well as peer-to-peer communication. Participants will practice clarity in speaking to non-scientists about their work and may be actively engaged in improvisation exercises or explaining scientific material to lay people.

Space and Technical Requirements: The plenary requires a projector, laptop with internet connection and sound for video, lavalier microphone, technical support for presentation set-up, wireless clicker and flip chart or whiteboard. For a large audience, hand held microphones to pass around are also required.

10:00am - 1:00pm: Improvisation for Scientists, groups of 16

Improvisation for Scientists is a workshop pioneered by science advocate, Alan Alda. Participants will take part in improvisational theater exercises aimed at helping them connect more directly and spontaneously with different audiences. This is not about turning scientists into actors or comedians, but about helping the participant recognize and engage with the audience on a level where the message of the scientist can land effectively with the listener. These games require participants to pay close, dynamic attention to others and emphasize the two-way nature of communication: What is received counts more than what is said. Through the course of training, participants will investigate body language, listen with more awareness, and respond with greater sensitivity.

Improvisation requires a large (minimum 30' x 30') open space with movable chairs. The workshop can be noisy, which should be considered when booking space.

1:00 - 2:00pm: Lunch

2:00 - 5:30pm: Distilling Your Message, groups of 8

1-hour introductory plenary & 2.5-hour breakout session

The combination of an interactive plenary and small group break out sessions helps participants learn to speak clearly and vividly about their work and why it matters, in terms non-scientists can understand. Participants will practice finding common ground, speaking at different levels of complexity for different audiences, storytelling, and answering questions about their work. The plenary will address problems and solutions in public interactions as well as peer-to-peer communication.

The plenary requires a projector, laptop with internet connection and sound for video, lavalier microphone, technical support for presentation set-up, wireless clicker and flip chart or whiteboard. Breakout sessions should take place in a small conference or classroom, with chairs around a table or in a circle.

Day 2: Applying Skills

On Day 1, we worked on connecting with audiences and distilling messages. On Day 2, we will apply the lessons of Improvisation and Distilling in more challenging settings. After a warm-up, half the group will participate in Media Interview Skills, while the other half will participate in Improvisation II. After lunch, the groups will switch, so each participant will take both workshop sessions. The day will end with an evaluation session.

9:00 – 10:00am: Warm-up using improvisation and media interview tips

10:00am -1:00pm: First Workshop Session, participants divided in half

Media Interview Skills, *half the participants, in groups of 8*

We'll practice doing a television interview, including using Improvisation skills to prepare and answering questions clearly, crisply, and very briefly. This is a challenging form of Distilling Your Message. The interviews will be recorded on video and participants will be able to download their interview later and use it as they wish.
Space and Technical Requirements: You will need 1 room per group of 8 that is relatively quiet. You will also need 1 video camera and operator per group of 8. Footing is to be recorded onto standard SD cards for each participant to keep.

Improvisation for Scientists II - Engaging Varied Audiences, *groups of 8 or 16*

Participants will develop further skills of connection, empathy and relationship introduced in Improvisation and Distilling Your Message. The session will include games, exercises and role-playing scenarios with difficult audiences.

Space and Technical Requirements: One large (minimum 30' x 30') open spaces with movable chairs. The workshop can be noisy, which should be considered when booking space.

1:00 - 2:00pm: Lunch

2:00 - 5:00pm: Second Workshop Session (same components as in the morning, groups switch)

5:00 - 5:30pm: Reflecting on Our Experiences

What approaches worked better? What choices were productive? Has your approach to communicating changed and, if so, how? What next steps would be useful? Includes evaluation survey.