

'Sustainable diet' messaging advice for audiences living in Moston

Based on the learnings and insights gained from the narrative workshop held at Miners Community Arts Centre in Moston in Manchester on 14th June 2023, this document offers advice on do's and don'ts when creating messaging for Moston residents on 'sustainable diets', and recommends messaging to use on the community Facebook group.

Note: The qualitative data informing the advice and recommendations given in this document are not representative of the Moston population. The research was conducted with a small sample of six. Therefore, this advice should be used alongside insights gained from the follow-up survey being sent to a wider group of participants who identify as male, as the narrative workshop participants all identified as female and the number of participants was fewer than ideal leading to possible skewed data.

Do's and Don'ts for communicating about 'sustainable diets' with Moston residents

Do's	Don'ts
DO connect to the local area and the community Connect to locality in messaging. Participants want to hear about what's good in their community, e.g. the creativity of the people in Moston, as well as the benefits of specific policies / actions on where they live.	DON'T fail to acknowledge what people are already doing People in Moston are already taking action that benefits the community and the environment, e.g. Moston residents might already be saving leftovers, or growing their own food to help their mental health.
DO talk about education and shared experiences around preparing and cooking food Cooking and diet was seen by participants as something passed down through generations. Stating a few facts about food and cooking, and encouraging learning on healthy diets would help to frame food and diet as something for all generations.	DON'T avoid mentioning different cultures in Moston, but treat this with care Don't ignore the cultural influences on food and diet and how food can unify and bring people together. Avoiding mention of culture may exclude some people in Moston. However, this could lead to backlash among this audience if we aren't careful. E.g. talk about 'family heritage', and how food plays a central role in this for all of us, which can be interpreted differently by different cultures.
DO suggest simple, clear actions for individuals Participants wanted to know what simple actions they can take, however, they don't want to be lectured. Do make sure language in messaging doesn't come across as condescending e.g. the phrase ' <i>Those who are able to, can take action</i> ' was disliked.	DON'T ignore the role of big businesses Participants believe pressure should be put on big businesses to take action, rather than solely putting pressure on individuals. Make simple suggestions of actions individuals can take, but don't do this without acknowledging the role of big businesses.
DO talk about food waste where possible The narrative focused on reducing and avoiding food waste performed best when compared to the other narratives focused on diet, cooking, and growing. Participants seemed to resonate more with actions to reduce food waste.	DON'T overcomplicate messaging by mentioning the climate impacts of food Participants seemed to respond well to taking action on climate change, e.g. participants liked the phrase ' <i>Eating healthier and better for our pocket and the planet is also doing our bit about climate change</i> '. However, more detail on the climate impacts of food did not land well, e.g. the phrase

	<i>'Extreme weather will reduce the quality of healthy fruit and veg'</i> was disliked. Climate concern is there, but it seems detailed messaging on climate impacts does not resonate.
DO frame eating more vegetables as an opportunity to save costs Participants resonated with the action of reducing food waste to reduce the cost of food bills, and the acknowledgement that cost of living is a concern.	DON'T focus too much on 'reducing meat' For many participants, meat is a big part of their diets, and they struggle to believe they could cut it out of their meals completely. Instead, focus on softer actions such as 'one meat free day per week'.
DO talk about the links between food and nutrition Participants wanted to learn more about how certain foods linked to nutrition, rather than stating food was good for health but not explaining how. Participants were also particularly keen on the mention of mental health and how this is supported by being outside in nature growing food.	DON'T use jargon or negative language E.g. <i>'Plant-based food', 'sustainable food', 'energy-efficient', 'fuel our bodies', 'extreme weather', 'Irresponsible', 'vulnerable'</i> Participants felt <i>'plant-based food'</i> was too 'middle class' and too much 'marketing' language. Avoid phrasing that would usually be used to market products, and instead use plain language such as 'eating more vegetables'. Avoid negative framing or language in Facebook messaging, as this was disliked by participants.

Recommended Facebook messaging about 'sustainable diets' for Moston residents

Key

Tested text: The marked text was tested in the narrative workshop and was evaluated positively by participants.

New composition: This is language constructed by the researchers, drawing on the qualitative data gathered from the narrative workshop or added to create a coherent message.

Explanation	Recommended messaging
<p>Messages on food waste:</p> <p>Reducing food waste was the most popular topic and narrative. This came from a place of cost saving and that wasting food just isn't right.</p> <p>Participants want to know simple ways to help without being told what to do, and also for their current efforts to be acknowledged.</p> <p>Participants think pressure needs to be put on big businesses (e.g. supermarkets), not just individuals.</p>	<p>Reducing or avoiding food waste can save us money. We could carry on doing simple things to avoid food waste; like being smart about what we really need to buy when shopping and planning our meals.</p> <p>Supermarkets throw away huge amounts of perfectly good food, so they need to take responsibility. But, reducing food waste from our household too will stop us wasting money each month.</p>
<p>Messages on cooking:</p> <p>Community and family was a focus</p>	<p>Cooking more vegetables and healthy food and talking about it is a great way to come together as a community.</p>

throughout the narrative workshop, as something participants are proud of and see as important.

Participants felt there is a need for wider **education** on cooking and healthy food, especially among children.

Participants also voiced the need for **culture** to play more of a role in messaging about food, because what people eat is often influenced by their culture.

Messages on **food growing**:

Links between **nature and mental health** seemed to be well received by participants, but they were put off by statements they felt were inauthentic e.g. *'People are eating more fruit and veg as part of doing their bit for nature.'*

Participants wanted to hear about the specific **benefits to Moston** that certain actions will bring.

Messages on adopting a sustainable **diet**:

This narrative was disliked by the majority of participants, but once again did seem to like **pressure being placed on big businesses**, not just individuals.

Participants wanted '**plain language**' as opposed to 'jargon' to describe sustainable food.

Participants wanted to hear more about **nutrition** from food.

Participants did not respond well to the phrase *'a recent survey told us...'*. Participants were not a part of this survey and so it wasn't relevant to them.

Moston's community spirit can grow even more through more local activities such as cooking and food sharing clubs. **These clubs will also help more families learn about preparing healthy food!**

Cooking together can also help us all to learn about how our own heritage has influenced what we eat, and how our families have always cooked and prepared food. Moston is home to many families and food can bring this community together.

Nature is good for us. Increasing the amount of food we grow in Moston in gardens and allotments would help us look after our **mental health** and would help to keep food local.

We could do this by setting up local food growing programmes, **which would bring the community together and help us all to meet new people**, and could also be great for job and income opportunities for people living in Moston **too**.

By working together, we can hold the government and big businesses accountable for their actions that affect our environment. The government and businesses need to make it easier for us all to eat more **vegetables and healthy food** – it's not fair that people with less money can't afford to eat well or that healthier food choices can sometimes be more expensive.

Eating more vegetables will also help us to get the nutrition we need, such as fibre and vitamin C. People in Moston already do lots for the environment, **and eating more nutritious food will also be doing something for ourselves too!**

A recent survey **used in our 'Manchester is Green' work found that...**