

Ep.1 Discussion Guide: "Simplifying Science with Amanda M. Dettmer, PhD and Robert Nobles, DrPH, MPH, CIP"

In this episode of "Research Ethics Reimagined," we explore building and maintaining trust in research and science in the 21st century by creating a connection with the public and simplifying the language scientists use. Our guests are Robert Nobles, DrPH, MPH, CIP, Vice President for Research Administration at Emory University and Amanda M. Dettmer, PhD a research scientist at the Yale Child Study Center. ([Transcript available](#))

Discussion Questions

1. Understanding Research Value
 - Robert and Amanda discuss the importance of sharing their work with non-scientists. How do you think a scientist could best explain their research in a brief, engaging way?
 - Robert shares an analogy about beach water safety to illustrate a complex scientific concept. What other examples or comparisons have helped the public better understand complicated research ideas?
2. Institutional Support for Science Communication
 - Robert proposes organizations like PRIM&R could provide communication "playbooks" for scientists. How might having clear, consistent messaging from research institutions help create a better understanding of the public value of their work?
 - Amanda mentions the importance of institutions proactively promoting and defending their scientists' work. What types of outreach or resources from research organizations would make you feel more informed and engaged with their efforts?
3. Building Trust in Science
 - Amanda discusses the challenges of addressing misconceptions while maintaining accuracy, particularly regarding research with nonhuman animals. When you encounter conflicting information about a controversial scientific topic, what strategies do you use to determine which sources are reliable?
 - Robert and Amanda emphasize the need for institutions to support scientists and highlight the societal value of research. What could research organizations do to help you feel more confident in the credibility and importance of their work, especially on sensitive or complex issues?

Key Terms and Acronyms

- PRIM&R: Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research, the organization that produced this podcast. PRIM&R is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, founded in 1974, that works to ensure the highest ethical standards in research.
- IRB: Institutional Review Board, a committee that reviews research involving human subjects

Additional Resources

- [Pew Research Center](#), “Americans’ Trust in Scientists, Positive Views of Science Continue to Decline” (Nov. 14, 2023)
- Research Ethics History and Principles
 - **PRIM&R's Research Ethics Timeline**, mentioned by Ivy as a resource for exploring the history of ethical frameworks in human and animal research: <https://primr.org/research-ethics-timeline/>
 - **The Belmont Report**, a landmark document outlining ethical principles for human subjects research, discussed in the context of evolving understanding of participant vulnerabilities: <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/index.html>
 - Three basic principles, among those generally accepted in our cultural tradition, are particularly relevant to the ethics of research involving human subjects: the principles of respect of persons, beneficence and justice. (Source: The Belmont Report, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, [LINK](#))
- **National Research Act (1974)** – This law, which was spearheaded by Senator Ted Kennedy and represented one of his earliest achievements, created the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. The Commission spent five years developing the Belmont Report and ultimately mandated IRB review of all federally funded research.