

# Embracing our audience: using comics for reflection and communication in health research



As **researchers**, we know it is vital that our work is **understood** by people **outside of academia**. Less words and more pictures have been shown to help understanding of complex issues. **Comic strips** offer a valuable opportunity to **share our work** with the people it is intended to benefit. We created a **comic strip** to explain our research project that looked at existing research to investigate the experiences of **peer support** for parents of **babies cared for in neonatal units**.

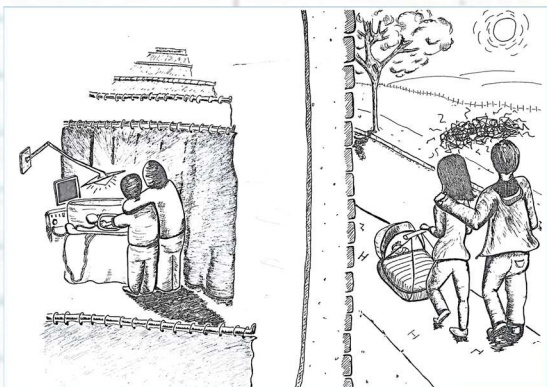


With reduced space and few words, what do people *really* want (or need) to know?

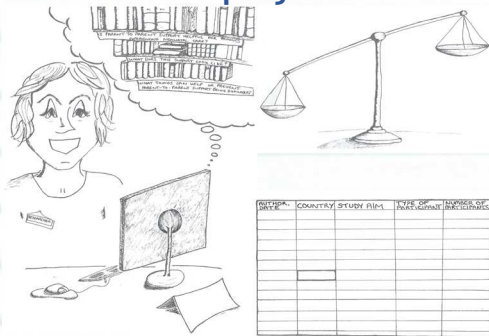
A fellow researcher and artist used an existing **plain language summary** of the protocol as her **template**. She illustrated **six cells** to show **why** the project was important and **how** the work would be carried out. The research team and **project Parent Advisory Group** offered suggestions for its improvement.

## What are our main messages?

Why our project is important



How we will carry out the project



How we will share our findings



Producing a comic strip helped us to **explore and question** our **assumptions** about effective communication of research.

**Visual representation** of the research process made us **reflect** on **several key issues**....

## What is our comic strip trying to achieve?

Is this different from our standard academic protocol and journal publications?



## Who are our audience?

Challenge assumptions about what a parent looks like



## How comics influence research

The process of creating a comic strip encouraged both the artist and researcher team to become more **conscious of underlying assumptions** within the project. Creating this graphic has helped us **reflect** on both the **process** and **decisions** made about and with our **Parent Advisory Group** throughout the project.

Contact us: @EvidSynthTeam

View Liz's work: <https://shawillustration.wordpress.com>