



# THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

of the European Network  
for Psychological  
Anthropology (ENPA)

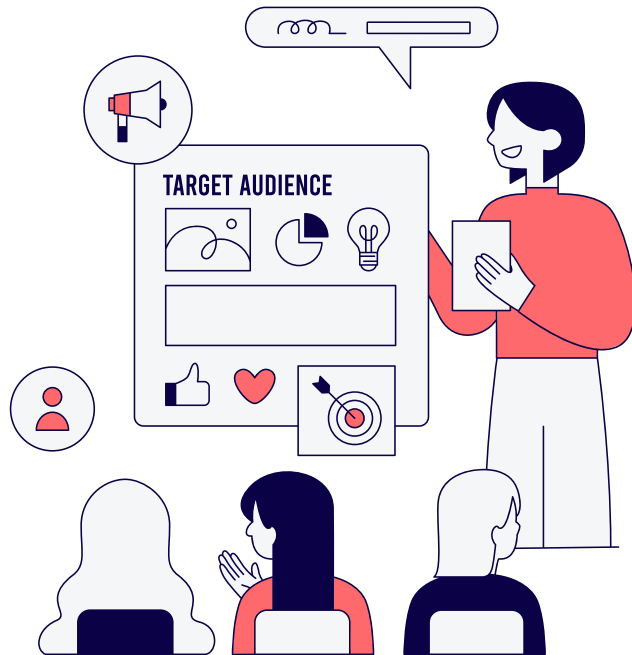
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as part of ENPA's Task Force on  
Public Psychological  
Anthropology

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# ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is intended as a quick how-to guide to help researchers think about and design public engagement events and activities. More detailed resources can be found at the end of this document.



## CONTENTS

What is public engagement (PE) & how does it work?

The 3 +3 PE questions to design your own event (+ planning & evaluation tips)

Get inspired! ENPA PE case studies

# WHAT IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (PE)?



“Public engagement describes the many ways organisations seek to involve the public in their work. For universities this covers a range of types of engagement, for instance ‘civic’ or ‘community’ engagement, which are part of the same family.”

(<https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/introducing-public-engagement>)

At its core, it is about involving “people and communities more actively, as a mutually beneficial activity” (ibid).

# WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF PE ACTIVITIES?

**Public engagement with research:** Actively involving the public in research activity.

**This toolkit focuses on public engagement with research,** though engaging the public in your research can have an impact on the other dimensions as well.

**Engaged teaching:** Developing teaching activities which positively impact on the community and enhance students' engagement skills.

**Knowledge exchange:** Increasing the two-way flow of knowledge and insight between an institution or one's work and wider society.

**Social & civic responsibility:** Seeking to maximise the benefits that an institution or one's work can generate for the public.

# WHY CARE ABOUT ENGAGING THE PUBLIC IN RESEARCH?

PE has become increasingly important in research over the past few years, to the extent that it may constitute a project objective in itself or a funding requirement.

For some researchers, it can also be a matter of principle to engage the public regardless of set requirements.

There are also some disciplines, as indeed anthropology, for which public engagement reads like 'business as usual' due to contact with the public being necessary to collect primary data.

**However, public engagement with research can go beyond data collection, extending to the conceptual stage of a project or even its aftermath.**



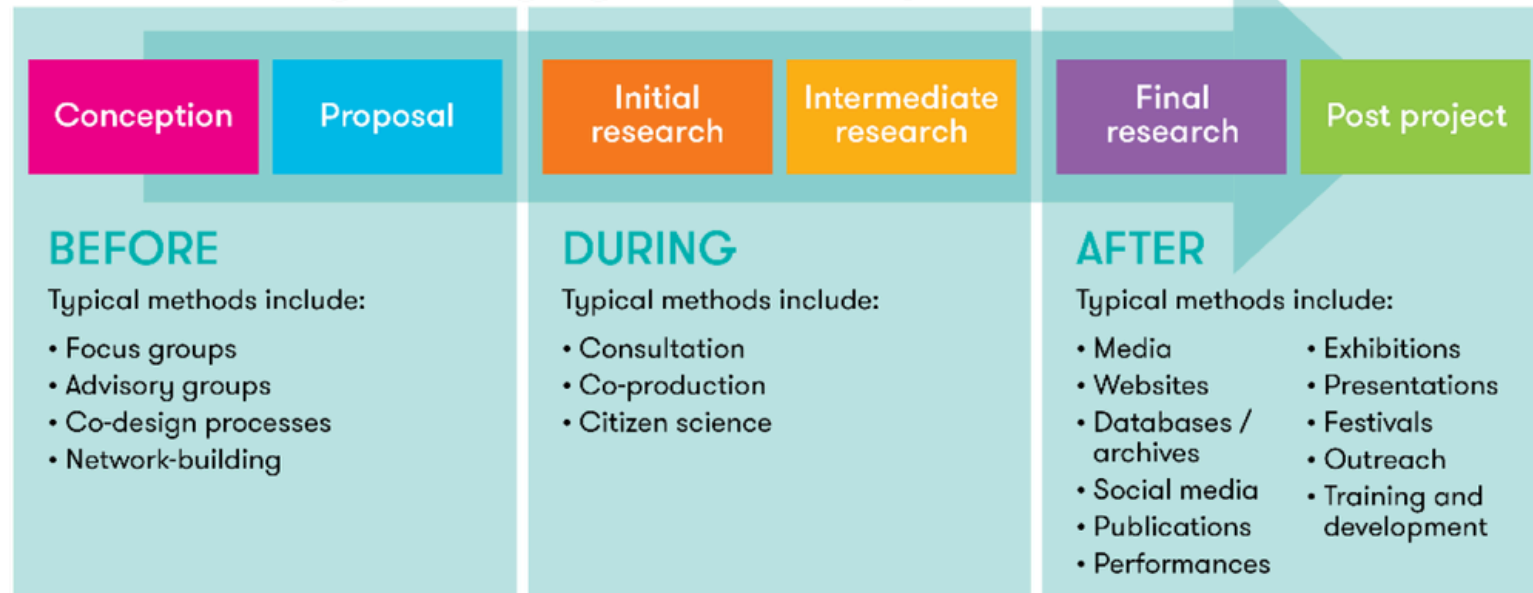
# PE BEFORE, DURING & AFTER RESEARCH

The idea is that finding ways to engage the public before, during or after your research holds multiple benefits, including **enhancing relevance, accountability, social responsibility and trust**

(<https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/introducing-public-engagement>). The following resource from NCCPE summarises some ways this can be done.



## WHEN can you engage with the public?



# NOW, DESIGN YOUR OWN PE EVENT!

To do so, answer 3 + 3 key questions...

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Why? (and what...)

Who? (and where...)

How? (and when...)

*It is advised that you answer all questions in the given order, i.e. all the whys first and then the what, continuing with all the whos and then the where, and concluding with the hows and then the whens!*



# Why? (and what...)

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- Why does a PE event matter to you (personally)?
- Why does a PE event matter to your project?
- Why does a PE event matter to the public?
- Why would the public engage with your event?

**What could this event be?**  
*(you can draw inspiration from the NCCPE resource, or the case studies you will find later in this toolkit)*



# Who? (and where...)

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- Who from the public would your PE event be relevant to?
- Who from the public would be interested in your PE event?
- *Is your target audience clear enough? (If so, the relevant and interested audience from above should overlap!)*
- Who from your institution or elsewhere should get involved in delivering the event (incl. to support with finances and resources, or even partnerships)?

**Where could the event take place (physically or remotely)?**



# How? (and when...)

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- How could you design and deliver your event (i.e. in what format)?
- How would you share it with your target audience?
- How sensitive is your PE event (e.g. addresses trauma, violence, etc.)?
  - Are you comfortable handling these sensitivities?
- How attentive should you be to your audience's circumstances (e.g. emotional distress, involving children, etc.)?
  - Should you include a specialist if you are not one?

**When's a good time to deliver your event?**

**When's a good time to start planning your event?**



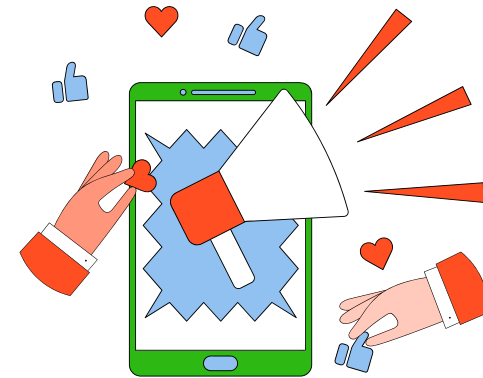
# PLANNING TIPS!

- Make sure there is enough time to **advertise** your event to your target audience and allow for any sign-ups required; in other words, do not plan it today and deliver it tomorrow or it will be just you attending!
- Small events, such as a research showcase or an exhibition, may benefit from **being included in wider events**, like a festival (i.e. the partnerships mentioned as part of the 'who' questions). This will not only help with publicity but also reduce some of the admin! On the other hand, though, it means that much of your planning will have to align with the wider event's requirements and timelines.



- No matter what you do, **treat your event like a project in itself**. Break it down into all the activities required, from inception to evaluation. This will help you get a better sense of timelines, dependencies, and when/how resources are to be spent. Using a project management software or tool is also recommended (several free options online).

# AFTER YOUR PE: EVALUATION, OR "HOW DID I DO?"



Public engagement does not end with the conclusion of your event.

Usually, the final stage is **evaluation, where you assess whether your PE objectives were met.** If you received funding for your PE or you delivered it as part of a wider framework, evaluation can also be a requirement.

Your objectives should already be clear to you after answering the 3 + 3 PE questions. **Before you start planning your event, write down your objectives in a clear and simple language,** and always refer back to them at each stage of your planning and delivery to maintain alignment.

Your objectives will also determine how to evaluate your event. **Some evaluation methods** frequently used are:

- Participants completing feedback forms - make sure they do so before leaving the event!
- Feedback loops among partners.
- Budget performance (planned vs. spent resources per activity).
- PE impact on subsequent phases of the research (e.g. new information collected, clarifications received, etc.).

# CASE STUDIES

## **“Mind the Culture”,**

a series of four podcasts supported by the European Network for Psychological Anthropology (ENPA).

In this series, ENPA members discuss how our cultural backgrounds shape the way we think, feel, and navigate the world.

Timeline: Released on 20/02/2025 on Spotify as part of EASA’s European Anthropology Days 2025  
<https://easaonline.org/european-anthropology-days/>

**ENPA Task Force on Public Psychological Anthropology: Julia Khan, Eleni Kotsira, Meghna Roy, Sakshi Saxena**

*(case study by Julia Khan)*

## **“Night of Dreams” multisensory workshop,**

as part of the internationally organised Museum Night. Its aim was to exemplify the role of senses and perceptions as part of the human experience of dreams, but also dreams as a culture-specific research subject.

Timeline: 02/05/2022 in the Estonian Literary Museum (Tartu, Estonia) as part of narrative and belief aspects of folklore studies (IUT 22-5) of the Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum.

**Reet Hiimäe**

## **“Dreamscapes: Traversing Landscapes of Addiction”,**

funded through a dedicated science communication funding scheme by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). It is based on the research project “Making Sense of Smartphone Addiction”.

Timeline: January - December 2026.

**Suzana Jovicic (PI); Co-Leads: Sanderien Verstappen, Barbara Göbl, Sophie Wagner**  
*(case study by Suzana Jovicic)*





# MIND THE CULTURE



## Why?

The Task Force sought to bring the expertise and insights of psychological anthropologists into public discussions of pressing psychosocial issues, thereby creating space for a Public Psychological Anthropology.

## Who?

The Task Force recognised that anthropological thinking should reach far beyond university campuses and academic departments. So, the podcast series aimed to engage anyone curious about how thoughts, emotions, and behaviours are shaped by cultural contexts.

## How?

One podcast episode was released per month starting in February 2025, recorded via the Riverside platform. The full series is now available from:

- Spotify:  
<https://open.spotify.com/show/47wkNfpEgpA8FDFVhJGASb>
- ENPA's website: <https://enpanthro.net/podcastaudio/>

*The “Mind the Culture” podcast series delves into the intersection of the sociocultural and the psychological, offering insights from an eclectic mix of experts. The aim was to shed light on the fascinating discoveries of psychological anthropologists and to make them accessible to a wider public. Episodes cover various topics, starting with the field of psychological anthropology itself and expanding to the popular matters of seeking to ascribe meaning(s) to life in different contexts, how psychotherapy has become a widespread practice across cultures, and how societal norms influence mental health at the academic workplace.*



# NIGHT OF DREAMS



## Why?

Twofold aim:

- Discuss with the public their most desired feelings, experiences, and objects, how dreams relevant to these change over time, what rituals have been performed to fulfill their dreams, and what symbols represent dreams {dreams = plans, aspirations and ideals}.
- Familiarise the public with how folkloristics and other humanities can research something as abstract as dreams.

## Who?

The event was open to anyone from the wider public interested, regardless of age.

## How?

Dream factory that stayed open for several hours, with the approach continuously adjusted depending on the audience.

*Engaged SIGHT, TOUCH and SMELL: participants in a dimly lit room could experience how dreams smell – substances with strong scents, such as plants, soap or diesel oil, had been placed into jars so participants could smell the content and think what memories each smell brought up for them; in some cases they could also touch the content (e.g. wool, thorned pieces of a fir tree).*

*Engaged LISTENING: narrating belief legends related to magical plants that have been believed to make dreams come true, about magical rituals (partly utilising the same substances in the jars) to become rich or attract one's dream partner.*

*The event was accompanied by live guitar music by Andrus Tins who improvised on the topic of "dreams". A dream box (i.e. a historical box that was used in earlier times for preserving folklore index cards) was also open throughout the evening, where visitors could write down their dreams and save them for future generations.*

# DREAMSCAPES TRAVERSING LANDSCAPES OF ADDICTION

## Why?

In a media-saturated world, addiction has gained renewed interest through discussions of digital-related addictions. Despite the considerable public attention this issue receives, the voices and perspectives of anthropologists – and social scientists more broadly – remain largely absent, despite decades of work on addiction.

## Who?

The Austrian general public, with different segments addressed through tailored activities, aiming to make these activities as accessible as possible to diverse audiences, including those who do not usually engage with university-based or traditional science communication spaces.

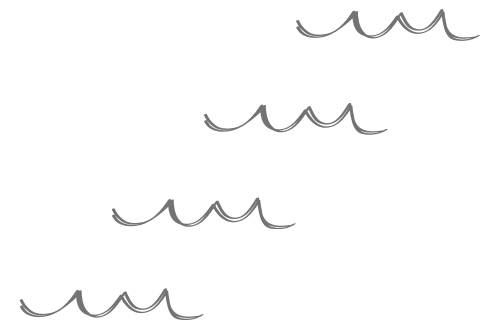
## How?

Multimodal spaces for reflection:

- A public theatre performance co-created with theatre educators and lay performers, including people with lived experience of addiction, culminating in a short film.
- A gallery exhibition and a digital exhibition of creative works inspired by art therapy.
- A public psychological anthropology podcast series.
- A comic on internet addiction for 12-15 year olds.
- School workshops.

*This project aims not only to engage the public with anthropological perspectives on emerging forms of addiction, such as the digital, but also foreground anthropological insights on the broader topic of addiction. Rather than providing answers, the activities raise questions that have emerged from anthropological research in an addiction clinic. In doing so, they seek to challenge established categories, norms, and processes of othering associated with so-called “addicts,” blurring the boundaries between addiction and non-addiction, as well as between spectator and performer.*

# SELECTED RESOURCES



- NCCPE:
  - *A quick guide to developing high quality public engagement.* (2023) <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/resources/guide/quick-guide-developing-high-quality-public-engagement>
  - *Introducing Public Engagement.* (n.d.) <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/introducing-public-engagement>
  - *Tools for talking about public engagement.* (n.d.) <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/resources/practical-tools/tools-talking-about-public-engagement>
- Sense about Science & NHS NIHR. (2017) *Public engagement: a practical guide.* <https://senseaboutscience.org/public-engagement-partnerships/public-engagement-a-practical-guide/>
- What Works Scotland. (2020) *How to design and plan public engagement processes: a handbook.* <https://policyscotland.gla.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WWSPublicEngagementHandbook.pdf>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & FURTHER INFORMATION

A draft version of this toolkit was first launched in a specialised workshop at [TAN's 2025 Conference Anthropologists and New Audiences: Pathways to Teaching and Learning](#). We are grateful to the workshop participants for testing the toolkit and providing feedback that helped reach this final version.

Find out more about the European Network for Psychological Anthropology (ENPA) by visiting the website: <https://enpanthro.net/>

Explore also ENPA's range of resources at: <https://enpanthro.net/audio-visual-resources/>

If you have any questions about the toolkit, see how you can contact Eleni Kotsira at: <https://elenikotsira.wordpress.com/contact/>

*This toolkit was designed on Canva using a template by the Braderlayout Studio.*