Motivation

- Fewer opportunities for research communication
- Growing need for researchers to effectively connect with public
- Improv theater combines story-telling and audience engagement

Workshop Goals

- Apply improv principles to research communication
- Connect with grad students from other fields
- Introduce Grad Slam as opportunity to practice skills

Workshop Development

Created in consultation with:

- Dr. Laura Lindenfeld, Executive Director of the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science (A PFTF Alum!)
- Mr. David Dannenfelser, Faculty, Theater Program, Rutgers University
- Dr. Maja Makagon, Associate Professor, Department of Animal Science, University of California Davis

Workshop Itinerary

1. Scaffolding improv theater games to build skills
   - Active listening
   - Story-telling
   - Audience engagement

2. Learn about Grad Slam from the 2021 & 2022 UCD Winners!

Outcomes

- Two 90 min workshops in Feb & May 2022
- 39 Participants
- MS, PhD, & Post-Docs
- 18 Graduate Groups
- 68% of surveyed participants new to improv
- 100% felt exercises facilitated practice of research communication skills
- 82% more likely to participate in Grad Slam

“I was nervous about attending this workshop as improv is way out of my comfort zone. But knew it would be beneficial. I’m so glad I went!”

“I has only been a few hours since the workshop finished, but I already had a chance to employ some of the techniques we learned.”

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