BHF Message Guide

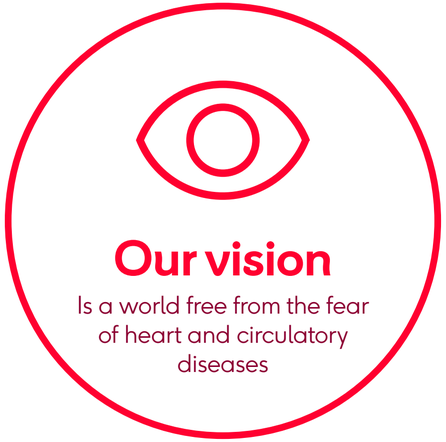
Your guide to what we say and how we say it

British Heart Foundation
July 2019

Contents

Who we are, in a nutshell

Who we are, in a nutshell



Our vision

Is a world free from the fear of heart and circulatory diseases

What we want to achieve as an organisation

Our values

Brave, Compassionate, Informed, Driven

The values and behaviours we all live by

Our purpose

We raise money to fund research that saves and improves lives

What we're doing to achieve our vision

Our promise

Beat Heartbreak Forever

The promise we make to people

Our personality

Fearless

How we come across to people

Internally

Externally

Roughly, this is where people will encounter the different parts of this page (for example, we are brave, compassionate, informed and driven in how we behave internally, whilst externally, customers will think of us as a fearless organisation when they see and experience what we do).

Why our messages matter

Why our messages matter

Millions of people know and support the British Heart Foundation. And we're privileged that everything we've achieved has made us internationally respected and trusted. But trust is hard to earn and easy to lose. That's why we can't afford to compromise on accuracy when we communicate.

But of course, this is easier said than done. We are dealing with complex conditions, cutting edge research, and the stories of real people. We don't expect you to know every detail off the top of your head. So that's where this messaging guide comes in.

You can use it to familiarise yourself with our key messages, refer back to when you need a reminder or to check something you aren't sure about.

If you have any questions about anything in this guide, please contact DLBrand@bhf.org.uk

Our key messages

Our impact

In 1961 we were closer to putting a man on the moon than knowing what caused a heart attack, and more than half of all deaths in the UK were from heart and circulatory diseases. Clearly, there was an urgent need for answers. And so the British Heart Foundation was formed to save and improve lives through the power of research.

It was a time when the only 'treatment' for a heart attack was bed rest. When there was no such thing as a coronary care unit, a heart transplant, a statin, a stent or a defibrillator. A time when the people who founded us decided enough was enough.

From 1961 to now, the research we've funded has transformed how we prevent, diagnose and treat a vast spectrum of heart and circulatory conditions.

The breakthroughs we've helped make possible include the UK's first heart transplant and the first portable defibrillator. We've worked out that blood clots cause heart attacks and proven which drugs have life saving benefits. Now we are finding out if our own cells can be encouraged to repair the damage caused by a heart attack.

But the true measure of our success is in the lives we have saved, the families we have kept together – we have helped halve the number of deaths from heart and circulatory diseases in the UK.

There is still so much to do, but all of our past successes drive us forward, knowing with utter conviction that research works.

Our key messages

What impact has the BHF had?

Short

By funding research across six decades, we've helped keep millions of hearts beating and millions of families together.

Long

By funding research across six decades, we've helped keep millions of hearts beating and millions of families together. From heart transplants and pacemakers to pioneering surgeries, we've had a hand in breakthroughs that have transformed our world. Our greatest achievement is that our work has helped to spare people all over the UK the heartbreak of losing someone they love too soon.

Our key messages

What is the BHF doing now?

Short

With donations from the public, we're investing in groundbreaking research that will get us closer than ever to a world free from the fear of heart and circulatory diseases.

Long

With donations from the public, we're investing in research that will get us closer than ever to a world free from the fear of heart and circulatory diseases. A world where broken hearts are mended, where millions more people survive a heart attack, where the number of people dying from or disabled by a stroke is slashed in half. A world of cures and treatments we can't even imagine today. We are backing the best ideas, the brightest minds and the biggest ambitions - because that's how we'll beat heartbreak forever.

Our key messages

What does the BHF do?

Short

We invest donations from the public into heart and circulatory research to help us all live longer, healthier lives with the people we love.

Long

Everything we do comes back to beating heartbreak from all heart and circulatory conditions including heart failure, stroke and vascular dementia. Every hour of research we've ever funded, every item we've ever sold, every campaign we've ever run. We use your donations to make people's lives healthier and longer.

Our key messages

Why should I give the BHF money?

Short

Nothing we've achieved would have been possible without donations from people like you. But if the donations stop, so does our research. And so does the search for cures and treatments that could save you or someone you love one day.

Long

Nothing we've achieved would have been possible without donations from people like you. But if the donations stop, so does our research. And so does the search for cures and treatments that could save you or someone you love one day.
The world is changing and so are the problems we face. We've helped halve the number of people dying from heart and circulatory diseases in the UK since the 1960s, but there is still a mountain to climb. More people are living longer with complex, long term conditions including heart failure. Obesity is on the rise, and so are other risk factors like diabetes. Risk factors put you at higher risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases. Support us, and we will set the world's brightest minds to work in pursuit of answers.

Our key messages

Why else should I give money to the BHF?

Short

We're here to keep hearts beating and blood flowing. With research spanning all heart and circulatory diseases, we are out to beat the world's biggest killers. From head to toe you have over 60,000 miles of blood vessels in your body so we have our work cut out.

Long

We're here to keep hearts beating and blood flowing. Whether you have heart failure, stroke or vascular dementia, we are out to beat it. Because our research spans all heart and circulatory diseases and all 60,000 miles of blood vessels in your body from head to toe.

With your support, we provide funding where it's needed most. We are independent, have more than fifty years of breakthroughs under our belt and we won't stop until we beat heartbreak forever.

Our key messages

Aren't all these conditions caused by an unhealthy lifestyle?

Short

A well balanced lifestyle gives us the best chance to live a longer, healthier life. But heart and circulatory diseases can happen to anyone. That's why our research is for everyone - heartbreak doesn't discriminate.

Long

Lifelong runner. Gym avoider. Professional athlete. Baking addict. Heart and circulatory diseases can happen to anyone. A well balanced lifestyle gives you a better chance to live a longer and healthier life, but it is not a guarantee. The genes you're born with can make you more vulnerable. This doesn't seem fair. Conditions like heart failure, stroke and vascular dementia kill at least 1 in 4 people in the UK, including people who always get their five a day and people who love nothing more than a Friday night takeaway. That's why our vital research is for everyone - heartbreak doesn't discriminate.

Our key messages

What's urgent about giving the BHF money now?

Short

More than 1 in 4 of us still die from heart and circulatory diseases in the UK. And nearly a million people are living with the life changing effects of heart failure. We urgently need to fund more research to find answers fit for 21st century challenges.

Long

The world has changed since we were founded, and so have the problems we face. People are living longer with complex, long term conditions including heart failure. Strokes are leaving millions permanently disabled. Air pollution is putting the health of whole communities at risk. Obesity levels are climbing. More people than ever are being told they have diabetes. These problems are growing and urgent and they affect all of us – we're talking about the lives of our mums and dads, brothers and sisters, grandparents and friends. Heartbreak is only ever a heartbeat away. And if we don't invest in research today, we can't save lives tomorrow.

Our key messages

How are the conditions connected?

Short

Heart and circulatory diseases can stop our heart from pumping and our blood from flowing properly. They can share the same risk factors and one can lead to the other. That's why our research starts with your heart, but it doesn't stop there.

Long

Heart and circulatory diseases can stop our heart from pumping and our blood from flowing properly. They can have the same risk factors and one can lead to another. Diabetes can damage your blood vessels, putting you at greater risk of developing coronary heart disease or suffering a stroke. And a stroke or a series of ministrokes can lead to vascular dementia. There are connections that we don't fully understand yet - but we will keep going until we do. That's why our research starts with your heart, but it doesn't stop there.

Our key messages

Why is this cause important?

Short

Every single one of us is vulnerable to the heartbreak caused by heart and circulatory diseases - they are the world's biggest killers. But the research we fund represents hope. And nothing matters more than finding cures and treatments that give us more time with the people we love.

Long

Every single one of us is vulnerable to the heartbreak caused by heart and circulatory diseases - they are the world's biggest killers. They bring devastation to every town, every street, every school and every workplace. We are talking about a huge global burden and we cannot afford to take our eyes off the ball. By funding research, we can find ways to prevent, diagnose, treat and even cure many heart and circulatory diseases. We can give people hope where there is none today, we can give people time they wouldn't have. And we can beat heartbreak forever.

Our key messages

How does the BHF help people now?

Short

When people affected by heart and circulatory diseases are in need they can turn to us. With our research, we give people hope. With our expert advice and training, we give people knowledge and support. And with our campaigning, we help build a healthier world for everyone.

Long

When people affected by heart and circulatory diseases are in need they can turn to us. With our research, we give people hope. With our expert advice and training, we give people knowledge and support. And with our campaigning, we help build a healthier world for everyone.

What we do helps give people the moments that matter most in life. The bedtime stories. The first kisses. The long overdue chats. The dinners that last all night. We help people with every breakthrough we've made, and every breakthrough we'll make.

Messaging for each condition

Each condition

Heart diseases

What are they:

Heart diseases are a range of conditions that stop your heart from working properly. For example, heart attacks, heart failure and congenital heart disease. There are dozens of different heart diseases, each with different causes, symptoms and treatments.

The scale of the problem:

The most common type of heart disease, coronary heart disease, is the leading cause of death worldwide. And in the UK, it kills someone every eight minutes. That's taking a shower, making a sandwich, drinking a coffee. You will not find a school, workplace or community not affected by heart diseases.

What are we doing:

Since we were founded in 1961, the number of deaths in the UK from coronary heart disease each year has more than halved. But we still have so much to do. We fund research into all forms of heart disease, discovering molecules in the lab, harnessing the power of big data, funding impactful clinical trials to improve the prevention, detection and treatment of these diseases.

For our most up to date research projects please visit Talk Research area on Heartnet.

Each condition

Diabetes

What it is:

Diabetes is caused by problems with the body's ability to produce or respond to a hormone called insulin, which helps to move glucose (a type of sugar) from your bloodstream into the cells of your body for energy. This leads to high levels of glucose in your blood.

The scale of the problem:

In the UK there are nearly 3.8 million people who have been diagnosed with diabetes - that's three times the population of Birmingham. It is estimated that there could be more than 800,000 people living with undiagnosed diabetes. Having diabetes puts you at much higher risk of developing life threatening heart and circulatory conditions.

What are we doing:

Our research into diabetes is focused on finding ways to prevent people who already have diabetes from developing heart and circulatory diseases.

For our most up to date research projects please visit Talk Research.

Each condition

Stroke

What is it:

A stroke happens when your brain cells become damaged or die due to a problem with blood supply to the brain. A stroke can have devastating consequences, affecting the way you see, think, move and speak.

The scale of the problem:

Strokes cause over 36,000 deaths in the UK every year and there are more than 1.3 million people who have survived a stroke - that's more than the population of Edinburgh and Leeds combined.

Strokes are connected to other risk factors and life threatening conditions. For example, if you have diabetes, you're twice as likely to have a stroke. In other words, stroke kills tens of thousands every year in the UK but millions more are at risk.

What are we doing:

Our stroke research focuses on ways to prevent a stroke or to improve immediate treatment after a stroke with the aim of reducing the damage it causes.

For our most up to date research projects please visit Talk Research.

Each condition

Vascular dementia

What is it:

Vascular dementia is a consequence of a problem with the blood supply to part of your brain. It means the cells in that area don't get enough oxygen or nutrients and start to die. The symptoms can include thinking, concentration and memory problems and upsetting personality changes.

The scale of the problem:

Right now, it is estimated that there are around 150,000 people in the UK living with vascular dementia. And although this may sound like a small number, it's a devastating condition, for which there is no cure or effective treatment. What's more, people living with diabetes are two to three times more likely to develop vascular dementia, and people with a history of heart disease are at least twice as likely to.

What are we doing:

Our research is focused on improving our knowledge and understanding of this devastating disease so one day we can prevent or treat it. We also fund research into identifying who is most at risk of vascular dementia, like people who have been diagnosed with other heart and circulatory diseases.

For our most up to date research projects please visit Talk Research.

Messaging do's and don'ts

Do's and Don't overview

When speaking about heart and circulatory diseases:

What you can't say:
Since we were established we have halved the annual number of deaths from heart and circulatory diseases in the UK.

What you can say:
Since we were established we have helped to halve the annual number of deaths from heart and circulatory diseases in the UK.

What you can't say:
More than 1 in 4 people in the UK will die from heart and circulatory diseases.

What you can say:
More than 1 in 4 people in the UK die from heart and circulatory diseases.

Talking about 'it starts with your heart'

What we can't say: We want to beat the heartbreak caused by heart diseases, stroke, vascular dementia and diabetes. That's why our research may start with your heart. But it doesn't stop there.

What we can say: Heart diseases, stroke, vascular dementia and diabetes are connected our research, or: Heart and circulatory diseases are often connected. They can have the same risk factors and one can lead to another. That's why our research starts with your heart, but doesn't stop there.

Talking about research

What we can't say: We're finding new treatments and cures for heart and circulatory diseases.

What we can say: We're finding better ways to prevent, detect, treat and cure heart and circulatory diseases.

Talking about heart diseases (congenital)

What you can't say:
12 babies are born every day with congenital heart disease.

What you can say:
In the UK 12 babies are diagnosed with congenital heart.
disease every day.

What you can't say:
We want to find ways to prevent, treat and cure congenital.
heart disease.

What you can say:
Our research aims to find better ways to diagnose and treat congenital heart disease.

Talking about vascular dementia

What you can't say:
We fund research to help your loved ones protect the important memories that matter.

What you can say:
We fund research to help better understand vascular dementia so we can develop ways to prevent, treat and cure it.

Talking about our research into strokes

What you can't say:
We help people recover from stroke.

What you can say:
We fund research to improve the prevention and treatment of strokes.

Being mindful of sweeping statements

What you can't say:
Heart disease can turn into a stroke.

What you can say:
Certain types of heart disease, such as atrial fibrillation, can increase your risk of stroke.

Talking about diabetes

What you can't say:
We're funding research to beat heart and circulatory diseases like heart attacks, stroke, vascular dementia and diabetes.

What you can say:
Diabetes increases your risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases.

What you can't say:
Diabetes causes heart and circulatory diseases.

What you can say:
Diabetes can cause heart and circulatory diseases

Talking about our research and diabetes

The BHF is investigating new ways to prevent people living with diabetes from developing heart and circulatory diseases.

Diabetes can cause damage to blood vessels in the body. Through research, we want to understand how diabetes causes damage to blood vessels and how to prevent and repair that damage.

Messaging do's and don'ts

When speaking about heart and circulatory diseases:

What you can't say:

Since we were established we have halved the annual number of deaths from heart and circulatory diseases in the UK.

What you can say:

Since we were established we have helped to halve the annual number of deaths from heart and circulatory diseases in the UK.

What you can't say:

More than 1 in 4 people in the UK will die from heart and circulatory diseases.

What you can say:

More than 1 in 4 people in the UK die from heart and circulatory diseases.

Messaging do's and don'ts

Terminology – when to use disease or conditions

To avoid confusion when describing heart diseases, stroke, vascular dementia and diabetes it is helpful to be consistent. The brand team have been using 'diseases' for example – these diseases are the world's biggest killers. However using both 'conditions' and 'diseases' is useful both to prevent too much repetition.

Disease vs diseases (singular or plural)

We fund research into all heart and circulatory diseases and their risk factors. When referring to heart and circulatory diseases please use the plural form, for example: Heart and circulatory diseases kill more than 1 in 4 of us in the UK. The same rule applies when referring to a set of diseases like heart diseases which include diseases like congenital heart disease and heart attacks.

It starts with your heart

Our brand campaign uses the line "our research starts with your heart but it doesn't stop there". This is to illustrate that the range of research we fund is wide and extends beyond heart diseases. When referencing 'it starts with your heart' we need to be careful not to imply that all heart and circulatory diseases and their risk factors are 'caused' by a problem that starts with the heart itself. Often, it's the circulatory system which is the link. For example – diabetes isn't caused by having a problem with your heart. Having diabetes damages your arteries, which can cause heart and circulatory diseases.

What we can't say: We want to beat the heartbreak caused by heart diseases, stroke, vascular dementia and diabetes. That's why our research may start with your heart. But it doesn't stop there.

What we can say: Heart and circulatory diseases are often connected. They can have the same risk factors and one can lead to another That's why our research starts with your heart, but doesn't stop there.

Talking about our research

We talk about discovering better ways to prevent, diagnose, treat and cure heart and circulatory diseases. Note that a lot of our work focuses on finding ways to prevent heart and circulatory diseases from happening in the first place. We want to find ways to prevent people from having a heart attack or a stroke, or developing vascular dementia, so it is important that we talk about our prevention work too.

Note also that our research looks at finding better ways to diagnose heart and circulatory diseases to ensure that where possible the right treatment reaches the right person at the right time to limit the damage caused by heart and circulatory diseases.

What we can't say: We're finding new treatments, and cures for heart and circulatory diseases.

What we can say: We're finding better ways to prevent, detect, treat and cure heart and circulatory diseases.

Messaging do's and don'ts

Heart diseases

What are they?

Heart diseases are a range of conditions that stop your heart from working properly. These conditions include heart attacks, heart failure and congenital heart disease. Each one has different causes, symptoms and treatments. It's important to fully understand the condition so you can make sure your messaging is accurate. For this guide we are going to use congenital heart disease as an example.

Congenital heart disease is a heart condition or defect you are born with. This is just one of many types of heart disease that we fund research into. We are funding some very exciting projects to find better ways to treat congenital heart disease, but we cannot say that we want to prevent babies being born with these conditions.

Congenital messaging watch-outs

What you can't say:

12 babies are born every day with congenital heart disease.

What you can say:

In the UK 12 babies are diagnosed with congenital heart disease every day.

What you can't say:

We want to find ways to prevent, treat and cure congenital heart disease.

What you can say:

Our research aims to find better ways to diagnose and treat congenital heart disease.

Messaging do's and don'ts

Circulatory diseases

Circulatory diseases are a range of conditions that affect your arteries, veins and the blood flowing through them. These include stroke, vascular dementia, atherosclerosis, deep vein thrombosis and peripheral arterial disease.

What is vascular dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term that refers to different types of dementia. Each type of this disease can cause symptoms such as a decline in memory or other thinking skills. Vascular dementia can be caused by a range of different diseases that affect blood supply to the brain.

There is currently nothing we can do to reverse the cognitive decline. We can't imply that our work will help to give people their memories back. But our research brings hope. With continued work, one day, we may be able to treat this heartbreaking condition.

Messaging do's and don'ts

Our research into vascular dementia

We don't yet know what causes vascular dementia in most cases, so our research into this condition is focusing on improving our knowledge and understanding of vascular dementia and ways to prevent it. We also fund research into identifying people who are more at risk of developing vascular dementia, for example, people who have also been diagnosed with other heart and circulatory diseases. Then in the future we hope to use this as a foundation to develop better ways to prevent and treat the condition.

At the moment our research wouldn't "help them remember" - though in the future that could be the case, there is still so much that needs to be understood.

What you can't say:

We fund research to help your loved ones protect the important memories that matter.

What you can say:

We fund research to help better understand vascular dementia so we can develop ways to prevent, treat and cure it.

Messaging do's and don'ts

Stroke

What is a stroke?

There are two different types of stroke - ischaemic and haemorrhagic. It is important to know which one you are talking about to ensure that our messaging is accurate. Generally speaking, a stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of your brain is cut off, causing your brain cells to become damaged or die. Ischaemic strokes are caused by a blockage in the blood vessel, most commonly due to a blood clot, and haemorrhagic strokes are caused by a bleed. When talking about strokes, you can refer to the singular or plural (stroke and strokes) – you can make this decision based on the grammar in your messaging.

Our research into strokes

Our stroke research focuses on ways to prevent a stroke or to improve immediate treatment after a stroke with the aim of reducing the damage it causes.

What you can't say:

We help people recover from stroke.

What you can say:

We fund research to improve the prevention and treatment of strokes.

Messaging do's and don'ts

Watch-outs

Be mindful of sweeping statements. For example, whilst some types of heart disease like atrial fibrillation (AF) could 'result in' a stroke using this statement without any context can be misleading. AF makes clots more likely to form in your heart and these can be swept out of the heart and up to your brain causing a blockage.

What you can't say:

Heart disease can turn into a stroke.

What you can say:

Certain types of heart disease, such as atrial fibrillation, can increase your risk of stroke.

Risk factors

Risk factors increase your chances of developing heart and circulatory diseases. These include, but are not limited to, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, smoking and family history.

Messaging do's and don'ts

Diabetes

What is it?

Diabetes is not a heart or circulatory disease, but having diabetes increases your chance of developing a heart or circulatory disease. This is why we consider it a 'risk factor' for heart and circulatory disease. We need to be careful when referring to heart disease, stroke, vascular dementia and diabetes in the same sentence.

How to refer to diabetes

What you can't say:

We're funding research to beat heart and circulatory diseases like heart attacks, stroke, vascular dementia and diabetes.

What you can say:

Diabetes increases your risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases.

Diabetes is caused by problems with the body's ability to produce or respond to a hormone called insulin, which helps to move glucose (a type of sugar) from your bloodstream into the cells of your body for energy. This leads to high levels of glucose in your blood.

We can mention diabetes as an umbrella term but should not talk about "type 1" diabetes as a standalone.

What you can't say:

Diabetes causes heart and circulatory diseases.

What you can say:

Diabetes can cause heart and circulatory diseases.

Messaging do's and don'ts

How to reference our research into diabetes

Our research aims to find out how we can prevent people living with diabetes from developing heart and circulatory diseases. It is not aiming to find a cure for diabetes itself.

We don't fund research to help people manage their diabetes on a daily basis and we don't offer practical day to day support services for people living with diabetes.

What you can't say:

BHF researchers are investigating new ways to help prevent, treat and cure diabetes We can mention diabetes as an umbrella term but should not talk about "type 1" diabetes as a standalone.

What you can say:

The BHF is investigating new ways to prevent people living with diabetes from developing heart and circulatory diseases.

Diabetes can cause damage to blood vessels in the body.

Through research, we want to understand how diabetes causes damage to blood vessels and how to prevent and repair that damage.

Our tone of voice*

*being fearless in the way we write

Being fearless in the way we write: Our tone of voice

Our personality is fearless. It's how we want people to see us, and the reason why they're drawn to us. So everything we do – how we invest funds, what we produce, what we communicate – must feel fearless.

That doesn't mean we have to talk about being fearless, or use the word all the time: this should be about our actions, not our words!

We are fearless in three ways:

We talk big

We go all in

We get personal

Our tone of voice

We talk big

We deal in life and death.

We know the facts.

We know the stakes.

We know the life saving impact of our work.

We're not afraid of what we're up against, because we can beat it.

We don't hide from any of it.

Practically speaking:

Use stats in context to find emotive ways to show the scale of our mission and the relevance to people (e.g. not 160,000 people per year, but 160,000 – that's the entire city of Oxford)

Issues seem bigger when you state them in black and white. Talk with assertion and imperatives (e.g. 'We are finding the cures', 'We have to.')

Try to keep headlines bold and punchy (e.g. 'Beat one, beat all. Forever.')

Avoid modifiers or indirect sentences that soften our language* (e.g. it's 'Learn about vascular dementia', not 'Like to learn more about vascular dementia?')

*of course, in some instances (for example, research statements), qualifiers will be required. This is for our key messages and leading branded communications.

It isn't:

Boasting. It's not about us.

Using shock tactics. We don't need to, because we are informed and driven.

Our tone of voice

We go all in

What we do takes conviction, commitment and full-on focus.

We're all in. Because it really matters to all of us.

And we're doing it now. Without time for jargon, formality or apologies. With the kind of energy that compels others to join.

Not as passengers, but as active supporters pushing wholeheartedly together.

Practically speaking:

Use short sentences. Sometimes in short bursts. Like the beating rhythm of a heart. Try to vary your sentence length in long copy, otherwise things get hypnotic, disjointed and ultimately, confusing.

Use the active voice over the passive. That means people doing things, rather than things getting done. (e.g. 'Find out how to register here', not 'Registration information can be found here').

Use plenty of verbs. It gives a feeling of activity – of people doing things. Even look to replace nouns with verbs. (e.g. 'Learn about heart disease', not 'Information on heart disease').

Try to keep the longer scientific words out of headlines (unless they really need to be there).

It isn't:

Being adrenaline junkies. We're not Red Bull.

Going harder, faster, stronger, using superlatives for the sake of it.

Being manic.

Sounding like we're hyperventilating or about to blow a blood vessel.

Our tone of voice

We get personal

We save and improve lives. It means people should have incredibly personal and specific connections with our work.

That's why we show exactly what it means to people and families. The hard reality they face, but also the huge potential of our research.

So more and more people can see the relevance of our work in their own lives.

Practically speaking:

Talk to people directly, like you're in the room with them (e.g. it's 'we', 'you' and 'us')

Appeal to people's own sense of fearlessness (e.g. 'Some things in life are easy. Forget them')

Tell people's real stories, using their real names. Talk about life being lived well – in big and little ways (e.g. 'I live for playtime with Toby').

Use the voices of medical professionals we work with to show their fearless passion and commitment (e.g. 'It's in my grasp').

Before you start writing, build a picture in your head of an individual you want your message to connect with. Keep them in mind throughout.

It isn't:

Being touchy-feely, or overly chatty.

Quirky or twee – we're not trying to be cutesy.

Generic everyday stories that could be said by anyone – let's make it relevant and always highlight our research or fundraising.

What we mean by fearless

What we mean by fearless

Fear is the unknown.

It's the things that happen to us and our loved ones that feel beyond our control.

Things like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, vascular dementia.

The unknowns in our heart and circulatory system.

The things that kill more than 1 in 4 of us in the UK.

But fearless?

Fearless is how we beat the heartbreak these killers cause.

It's the attitude that drives relentless research to discover better ways to prevent, diagnose, treat and cure these conditions.

Fearless embodies who we are and who we must continue to be.

It is how we will beat heartbreak forever.

What we mean by fearless

How we are fearless

We talk big

We deal in life and death.

We know the facts.

We know the stakes.

We know the life saving impact

of our work.

We're not afraid of what we're up against, because we can beat it.

We don't hide from any of it.

We go all in

What we do takes conviction, commitment and full-on focus.

We're all in. Because it really matters to all of us.

And we're doing it now. Without time for jargon, formality or apologies. With the kind of energy that compels others to join.

Not as passengers, but as active supporters pushing wholeheartedly together.

We get personal

We save and improve people's lives. It means people should have incredibly personal and specific connections with our work.

That's why we show exactly what it means to people and families. The hard reality they face, but also the huge potential of our research.

So more and more people can see the relevance of our work in their own lives.

What we mean by fearless

Fearless is not

Our values are compassionate, brave, informed and driven.
We must continue to live and breathe our values. Therefore fearless is not…

Reckless

Are we being insensitive to others and careless about the consequences of what we're doing?

Irrelevant

Are we making something that's bold but has no connection to raising support, our research, or our proposition?

Ignorant

Are we going into something without a proper understanding of what it's about, without any credibility to talk about it?

Ruthless

Are we working for personal prestige, rather than to help bring about a world without heart and circulatory diseases?

Glossary

We've been speaking about heart diseases for over 50 years. Because of this, we're quite comfortable when talking about them. But this is the first time that we are speaking about the full scope of our research. Our current marketing and communications focus sees us talk about stroke, vascular dementia and diabetes. In this index we've added as much detail as we can to help you better understand everything there is to know about the heartbreak that these conditions cause.

We've included some highlights of research that we are doing into these areas, but please consult Talk Research for our latest research projects and our stats hub for our latest statistics.

Diabetes

Description

Diabetes causes high levels of glucose, a type of sugar, in your blood. This is because of a problem with a hormone called insulin. Insulin is responsible for moving glucose from your bloodstream and into the cells of your body for energy.

- Diabetes can damage blood vessels all over the body.
- Through research, we want to understand the vessel damage and prevent the development of heart disease.

Symptoms

- thirsty
- poor circulation
- increased urination
- extreme fatigue
- poor healing
- hunger
- blurred vision
- headaches
- unexplained weight loss.

Statistics

- People with diabetes are 2 to 3 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease, which is the build-up of plaque in the vessels which supply blood to our hearts.
- People with diabetes are twice as likely to die from heart disease or a stroke.
- Diabetes causes damage to blood vessels all over the body, including the limbs, eyes, brain and kidneys.
- The UK healthcare costs of diabetes have been estimated at £1,500.000 per hour.

Research

In relation to diabetes, we want to do two things:

1. We want to understand exactly how diabetes damages our hearts and blood vessels.
2. Find ways to prevent and treat this damage and combat the early development of heart and circulatory diseases.

Vascular dementia

Description
Vascular dementia is caused by a range of different diseases of the blood supply to the brain. It has a wider and more variable range of symptoms than the other types of dementia.

Types of dementia
The proportions of those with different forms of dementia can be broken down as follows:
- alzheimer's disease: 62%
- vascular dementia: 17%
- mixed dementia: 10%
- lewy-body dementia: 4%
- fronto-temporal dementia: 2%
- parkinson's dementia: 2%
- other: 3%.

10% are diagnosed with mixed dementia. This generally means that both Alzheimer's disease and vascular disease are thought to have caused the dementia.

Causes
- The diagnosis often follows a stroke/several strokes.
- Damage to the blood supply caused by blocked arteries (atherosclerosis) or bursting of blood vessels in the brain (haemorrhage).
- An individual may have white matter disease (wearing away of tissue in the largest and deepest part of your brain).

Symptoms
Although the early signs vary, common early symptoms of dementia include:
- memory problems, particularly remembering recent events
- increasing confusion
- reduced concentration
- personality or behaviour changes
- apathy and withdrawal or depression
- loss of ability to do everyday tasks.

Statistics
- Vascular dementia is thought to affect around 150,000 people in the UK.
- Vascular dementia is the second most common type of dementia after Alzheimer's disease.
- People with a history of coronary heart disease are twice as likely to develop vascular dementia.
- People with diabetes are 2-3 times more likely to develop vascular dementia.

Treatment
- Treatment can help prevent further damage to the brain in people with vascular dementia and may slow down its progression.
- Medication may also be offered to treat the underlying cause of vascular dementia.
- But there's currently no cure for the condition or a way to reverse the damage that's already occurred.

Research
- We want to increase our understanding of what causes vascular dementia and how it progresses, to try to find ways to better prevent, detect, treat, and reverse the effects of vascular dementia.
- Some of our research is joint funded with the Stroke Association and Alzheimer's Society.

Stroke

Description

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of your brain is cut off, causing your brain cells to become damaged or die. Some strokes are caused by bleeding in or around the brain however these are less common in the UK. The different types of stroke include:

ischaemic strokes happen when an artery that supplies blood to your brain becomes blocked by a blood clot. The artery may already have become narrowed, so the blood clot cuts off the blood supply completely.

haemorrhagic strokes happen when a blood vessel ruptures causing a bleed inside the brain. This affects the surrounding brain cells causing them to die.

mini-strokes, or transient ischaemic attacks (TIAs), happen when there is a reduction in blood supply to part of the brain causing symptoms which get better, such as temporary speech loss. Symptoms usually pass within 24 hours. A person may have several TIAs over time, which means different parts of the brain can be affected.

Statistics

- There are more than 100,000 strokes in the UK each year.
- There are over 1.3 million stroke/TIA survivors in the UK.
- Having coronary heart disease doubles the risk of having a stroke.
- Many people who survive a stroke are living with the devastating after-effects which can include paralysis, speech problems and memory loss.
- Stroke is a leading cause of disability in the UK.
- Stroke changes lives in an instant.

Stroke research

Description

We want to prevent strokes from happening in the first place, and better treat those who suffer a stroke.

We fund a huge volume of research into risk factors for stroke, particularly high blood pressure and atrial fibrillation.

High blood pressure isn't usually something that you can feel or notice, but if you have it you're more likely to have a stroke. This is because high blood pressure damages the walls of vessels, making them more likely to clot. We fund around £21 million of blood pressure research.

And atrial fibrillation is an abnormal heart rhythm causing the heart to beat irregularly. When this happens, clots are more likely to form in your heart, and these can be swept out of the heart and up to your brain causing a clot.

We fund £15 million on atrial fibrillation research.

We are one of the largest independent funders of stroke research in the UK. We've always

Research

We want to prevent strokes from happening in the first place, and better treat those who have a stroke.

We fund a huge volume of research into risk factors for stroke, particularly high blood pressure and atrial fibrillation.

High blood pressure isn't usually something that you can feel or notice, but if you have it you're more likely to have a stroke. This is because high blood pressure damages the walls of vessels, making clots more likely to form.

And atrial fibrillation is an abnormal heart rhythm causing the heart to beat irregularly. When this happens, clots are more likely to form in your heart, and these can be swept out of the heart and up to your brain causing a blockage.

We are one of the largest independent funders of stroke research in the UK. We've always funded stroke research and we'll continue to do so.

bhf.org.uk

Breakthroughs born from visionary medical research. Heart transplants. Clot busting drugs. Pacemakers. Research you fund with your donations.

Heart and circulatory diseases kill more than 1 in 4 people in the UK.

They cause heartbreak on every street. But if we can invent machines to restart hearts, fix arteries in newborn babies, build tiny devices to correct heartbeats, and if we can give someone a heart they weren't born with - imagine what's next.

We fund research into all kinds of heart and circulatory diseases and their risk factors. Heart diseases, stroke, vascular dementia, diabetes and many more. Connected. Under our microscope.

Our research is the promise of future cures and treatments.

The promise to protect the people we love. Our children.

Our parents. Our brothers. Our sisters. Our grandparents.

Our closest friends.

You and the British Heart Foundation.

Together, we will beat heartbreak forever.

Beat heartbreak forever.

Beat heartbreak from heart diseases stroke vascular dementia diabetes