

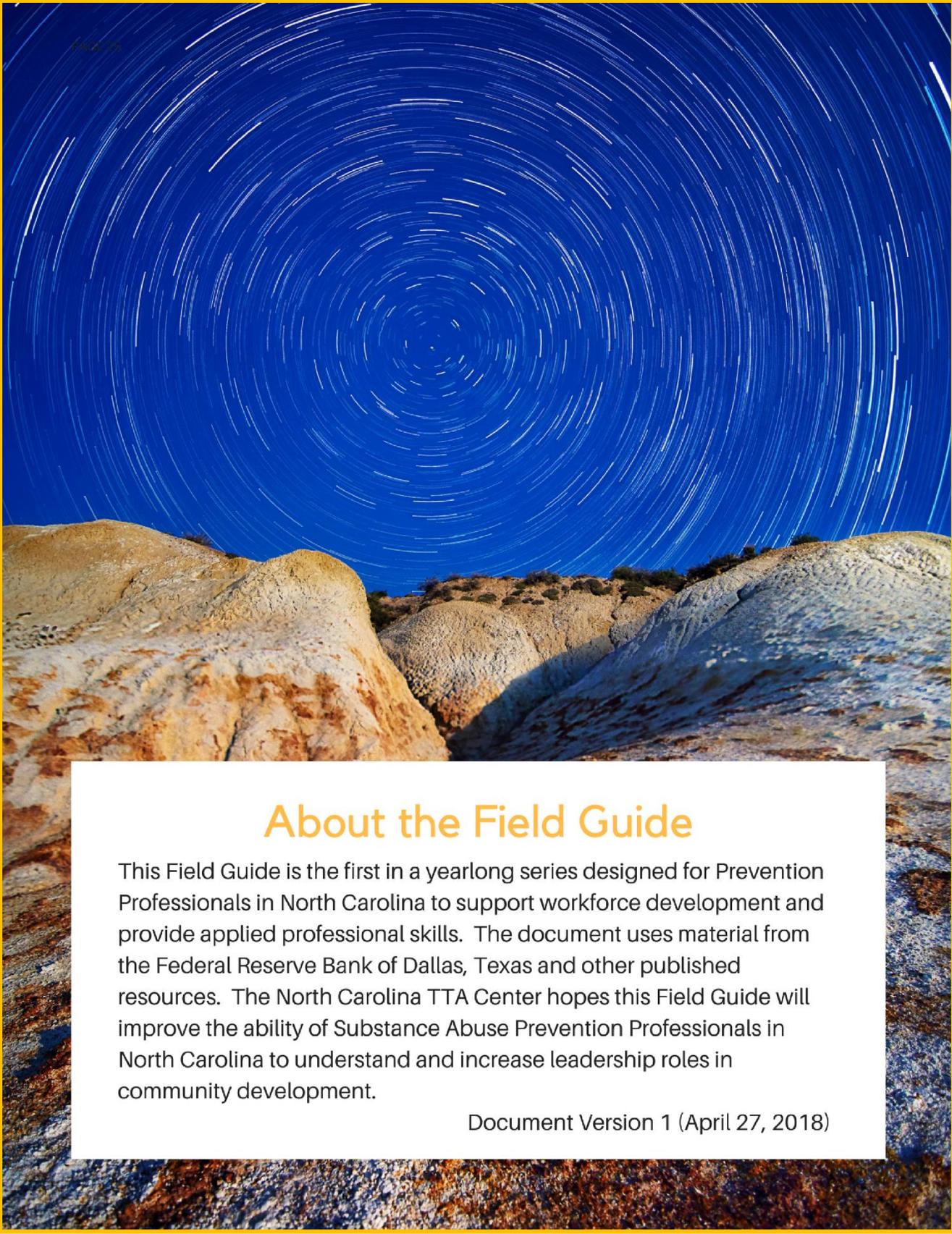
NCTTA

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERIES

**FIELD
GUIDE**

Presentation
Skills for
Expanding
Opportunities
and Partners





About the Field Guide

This Field Guide is the first in a yearlong series designed for Prevention Professionals in North Carolina to support workforce development and provide applied professional skills. The document uses material from the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Texas and other published resources. The North Carolina TTA Center hopes this Field Guide will improve the ability of Substance Abuse Prevention Professionals in North Carolina to understand and increase leadership roles in community development.

Document Version 1 (April 27, 2018)

Field Guide Objectives

A primary learning goal of the first NC TTA Workforce Development Series instance titled **Presentation Skills for Expanding Opportunities and Partners** is to create an interactive webinar experience where attendees learn about community development models and gain applied presentation skills.

Event Objectives include:

- Understanding the Community Development Model using the Healthy Communities Framework as a best practice approach
- Making connections between expanding opportunities and effective presentation and business communication skills
- Opportunity to assess participant presentation skills in advance of the webinar for individual discussion and coaching
- Discussion of effective strategies to help plan and prepare future presentations
- Best practice methods to support effective delivery of presentations with energy and composure

Presenter Information

Jamie Edwards, NCTTA Staff, has spent over twenty years providing training in the arenas of workforce development, soft and professional skills as well as formal college instruction in the disciplines of sociology, human services, counseling and educational research.

Intervention Profile Coding for ECCO

Strategic Planning
2 Hours

Pre-Event Material Distribution

Two Pre-Event Resources were provided to individuals who registered for the Presentation Skills for Expanding Opportunities and Partners. The first of which was a self-assessment of current presentation skills and desired goals. This self-assessment of presentation skills will be discussed later in the field guide.

Second, all registered participants received a link to the TED Talk Video Titled TED's secret to great public speaking in hopes of building pre-requisite knowledge in preparation for the formal webinar experience. Building new relationships require the ability to spread the message of our good work in clearly defined methods - to a new audience that may not understand

prevention theory. In the video, Chris Anderson (the TED Founder), talks about the formula for a great TED Talk. [Click here to view the TED Video.](#)

Formal Webinar Agenda

Friday – April 27, 2018

- Introductions (10:00 – 10:05)
- Intent (10:05 – 10:15)
 - Learn about the Community Development Model
 - Enhance Presentation Skills
 - Become more active within the community development effort, become an advocate and understand that sometimes the medium is the message!
- Why the Community Development Idea? (10:15 – 11:00)
 - Intersection of community prevention work
 - A model to consider, the Dallas Texas Federal Reserve Bank
- Presentation Skills (11:00 – 11:10)
 - Review of Presentation Skills Assessment Results
 - What the data says about the lack of presentation skills
 - The better we present ourselves the more effective we will be
- Planning Your Presentation (11:10 – 11:50)
 - Dealing with Anxiety
 - Planning Your Presentation
 - Preparing for Your Presentation
 - Presentations with Energy and Composure
- Closure and Future Webinars (11:50 – 12:00)
 - Interpositional skills that develop community relationships
 - PowerPoint and alternative presentations
 - Achieving Consensus
 - Group Facilitation
 - Public Speaking

Webinar Recording

The original pre-recorded webinar that is the basis of this field guide can be found by accessing:
<Insert Link>

Sources

The Webinar and associated Field Guide of the same name is based on the work of the following sources:

Background & Purpose - FFIEC Home Page. (n.d.). Retrieved 4 23, 2018, from FFIEC:
<http://www.ffiec.gov/cra/history.htm>

Healthy Communities Framework (2015). Retrieved 4 23, 2018 from Federal Reserve Bank of Texas www.dallasfed.org/cd/housing/healthy/craframework.aspx

Mandel, S. (2009). *Presentation skills: Captivate and educate your audience*. Axzo Press.

Nudge Theory in Practice (2015). Retrieved 4 25, 2018 from Birmingham University:
<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/hsmc-library/snappy-searches/Nudge.pdf>

Place-Based Initiatives. (n.d.). Retrieved 4 25, 2018 from
<https://www.cssp.org/community/neighborhood-investment/place-based-initiatives>

Understanding the Community Development Model using the Healthy Communities Framework as a Best Practice Approach

Introduction

The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) was enacted by Congress in 1977 and encouraged deposit institutions (such as banks) to help meet the credit needs of the communities in which they operate (Background & Purpose - FFIEC Home Page, n.d.). Subsequently the Eleventh District of the Federal Reserve Bank (Dallas, Texas) published materials on research-based community development models, specifically provided for as *Healthy Communities: A Framework for Meeting CRA Obligations (Federal Reserve Bank of Texas, 2014)*.

The Federal Reserve Bank Publication attempted to introduce effective community development practices for the banking and financial community. While the banking and financial community was the primary audience, other professionals and community advocates can learn much from the narrative. The intent of the Healthy Communities Framework indicates there is no “right” answer, yet the omnipresent goal is to make healthy the norm among the entire nation. The framework reminds the reader that a healthy nation is composed of thriving individuals and communities. From a community development perspective, a healthy individual in large part helps create a healthy community; while a status of high community health impacts the health of a national economy. In this theory, health is cyclical, since a strong economy impacts health status of a nation as well.

A Survey of Community Development

There are numerous community development models, all with a common design to make success stories common across the spectrum. The Federal Reserve Document Outlines the following indicators as best practices that may appear familiar to our current community practice:

1. Use innovative methods to leverage private capital
2. Blend people and place-based strategies to realize a broader vision
3. Provide equal opportunity to quality education so that everyone can reach their highest potential
4. Measure outcomes to identify what works
5. Invest resources in what works

The article Placed Based Initiatives (n.d) published by the Center for the Study of Social Policy indicates what is a staple of effective prevention practice, that families do better when they are part of strong and effective communities. Community development is a equitable approach intended to build stronger neighborhoods, children and communities wherever they may exist using the strengths of the respective geographic location. The following types of capacity

development efforts are identified in research to support effective community development efforts:

- Managing a broadly supported community process designed to improve results for children and families in a particular neighborhood
- Working with neighborhood residents as leaders, “owners” and implementers of neighborhood transformation efforts
- Creating strategic and accountable partnerships that engage multiple sectors and share accountability for results
- Collecting, analyzing and using data for learning and accountability
- Designing and implementing strategies based on the best available evidence of what works
- Developing financing approaches that better align and target resources
- Addressing policy and regulatory issues
- Using sophisticated communications strategies to build public and political will
- Deepening organizational and leadership capacity

In closing, community development efforts focus on changing well defined geographic areas addressing housing, education, private investments, social services and taking advantage of the unique talents of the community.

When Healthy is the Norm

The creation of healthy community norms is the responsibility of individuals and organizations. The Healthy Communities Framework introduces “Blue Zones” as part of a study of common features of healthy environments and behaviors common to increased functioning and life expectancy. The paper indicates nine common indicators of successful Blue Zones.

What is a Nudge?

A nudge is a psychological tool designed to promote behavior change and improve health. This could be a subtle policy shift that could make people act or behave in a certain way.

Many of these features relate back to healthy eating and expands into active work currently being implemented in the prevention field within North Carolina including:

1. Live in environments “that constantly nudge them into moving without thinking about it.”
2. Have a sense of purpose
3. Have routines that reduce stress
4. Eat only until 80 percent full, eat the smallest meal in the late afternoon or early evening and don’t eat thereafter
5. Eat a diet centered on beans and eat three to four ounces of meat only five times a month.
6. Drink one to two glasses of alcohol a day with friends and/or with food. (Note: Seventh Day Adventists in Loma Linda are the exception.)
7. Belong to a faith-based community
8. Prioritize all generations of family by keeping aging parents and grandparents at home or nearby, committing to a life partner and investing time and love in their children
9. Be in social circles that support healthy behaviors because “smoking, obesity, happiness and even loneliness are contagious



The Blue Zone

Blue Zone Concepts

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has also studied Blue Zones and what it takes to help build and/or sustain healthy communities. In 2010, RWJF published *A New Way to Talk About the Social Determinants of Health* as cited in the Healthy Communities Federal Reserve Document. A portion of a direct quote relates directly back to prevention practice in our state:

“...It’s time for America to lead again on health and that means taking several steps including “Stop thinking about health as something we get at the doctor’s office but instead as something that starts in our families, in our schools and workplaces, in our playgrounds and parks, and in the air we breathe and water we drink...Scientists have found that the conditions in which we live and work have an enormous impact on our health.”

Identifying Opportunities and Intersections

As Prevention Professionals we must be able to effectively convey current prevention theory, practice and existing community efforts. Many of these efforts we may not naturally call community development but fits models beyond our own environmental approaches.

The Healthy Communities Framework, by the direct foundation of people, place and strength-based models admit that opportunities exist in all communities. An existing opportunity is to leverage program experts, initiatives, organizations and communities. This is another example where prevention professionals can partner with the community development efforts of the public and private sectors.

To effectively contribute to community development work and the work of professionals outside our native prevention field, we must present our work and ideas in clear and efficient methods that supports the research and frameworks of all groups (ie. Community Development Framework and Strategic Prevention Framework). Community Development and Prevention Practice intersects with national and local foundation work, colleges and universities, hospitals, health departments, local government, economic development and health groups.

The use of external assessments such as Community Health Needs Assessments to help financial institutions guide their work as another familiar intersection with prevention. This data while often is only thought as relevant to the human or social sciences can be powerful indicators of economic wellbeing and financial community need. A hallmark of effective of modern community development and prevention work is breaking down existing silos, group and information while instead working together using a village approach. A mutual question for community development and prevention professionals is to understand how we see our own respective fields integrating and enhancing the efforts and professionals we normally do not work with day in and day out.

Summary

Modern community development is focusing on a common purpose, one that promotes best practices that can be replicated and expanded in communities equitably while being outcomes driven.

Benchmarks of effective community development includes:

1. Community Development seeks to use private and other sources of financial capital to create a culture of innovation.
2. Blend people and place-based strategies to realize a larger vision
3. Provide equal opportunity to quality education so everyone can reach their potential
4. Measure outcomes to identify what works
5. Invest resources that work

People and place based strategies take advantage of the unique strengths of individuals and/or their communities.

Discussion of Effective Strategies to Help Plan and Prepare Future Presentations

Public Speaking is a well-established fear in American Society, and has a formal name of Glossophobia. The chart below provides a perspective of how deep our public speaking fear resides.

<i>Fear of public speaking is known as Glossophobia</i>	
Percent of people who suffer from speech anxiety	74 %
Percent of women who suffer from speech anxiety	75 %
Percent of men who suffer from speech anxiety	73 %
Number of Americans who have a social phobia	5.3 Million
Number of Americans who have a fear of crowded or public places	3.2 Million

Source: Statistic Brain - <https://www.statisticbrain.com>

Presentation Basics

The terms “speech” and “presentation” are often used interchangeable – but for our purposes we need to understand the difference. A speech is a dedicated event such as a dedicated a political event, or other formal public events. Presentations are speeches that are usually given in a business, technical or professional setting. The audience is generally more specialized than those attending a public forum.

Tips for Dealing with Anxiety

Anxiety occurs any time we are placed under stress, symptoms that are commonly associated with speeches or public speaking include:

- A nervous stomach
- Sweating
- Tremors in the hands and legs
- Accelerated breathing
- Increased heart rate

The goal is to make the excess energy and anxiety work for you! See some of the following tips provided in the CRISP Publication *Presentation Skills* (2009):

- Organize – A lack of organization is a major cause of anxiety
- Visualize – Imagine walking into the room, being introduced, delivering your presentation with enthusiasm, answering questions. Mentally rehearse the entire event
- Breathe – When muscles tighten up and you feel nervous you might not be breathing deeply enough. Sit up, erect but relaxed, and inhale several times
- Focus on Relaxing – Instead of focusing on the anxiety focus on relaxing. Clear your mind
- Release Tension – As tension increases generally energy can get locked in the limbs. Your arms, legs and feet may shake.
If you have this type of tension, try to practice breathing before standing up
- Move – Speakers who stand in one spot and never gesture tend to experience more tension. Avoid locking your arms, imagine a one on one conversation
- Make Eye Contact – Give your presentation one person at a time. Relate to your audience as individuals. Look in the eyes of others as you speak. Connect with people, be personal
- Practice – Practice standing up, practice with your visual aids. Two dress rehearsals are recommended. Be video-taped and have others critique your practice performance. Watch the video tape and conduct self-reflection

“...luck favors those who have spent their preparation time building effective systems of communication and trust in one another”

Coach K writing in *Beyond Basketball* (2006).

The more your presentation is like a conversation, the more comfortable you and your audience will be.

CRISP Publication *Presentation Skills* (2008).

Clarifying your Approach

The adult attention span is only eight seconds.

True or False? It is common practice to organize a presentation by creating a PowerPoint Slide Deck first. Think about avoiding this approach. Instead a clearly and well-planned message design needs to take place before the design of slide deck. Consider the following steps before opening Power Point, Keynote or Slides:

1. What are your end goals and objectives?
2. Do you understand your audience and their needs?
3. Drill down on your core message, be as specific as possible
4. Make sure your main and supporting ideas support your goals and objectives
5. Tie everything and finish strong

Five Questions to Ask When Planning Presentation Goals and Objectives

- What do I want to achieve by making this presentation?
- What do I want my audience to do and think during my presentation?
- What specific things do I want my audience to do after my presentation?
- How do I want my audience to feel about my subject matter after the presentation?
- How do I want my audience to perceive me and my organization?

Make sure to understand your audience

Can you answer the following questions about your audience?

- What are their needs? What does the group think it needs? Don't be afraid to ask the audience what they expect before and during the presentation.
- How does the audience feel about the topic? Try to find out, because their feelings and perceptions must be factored into the presentation.
- Ask the audience how much they know about a particular topic. Don't assume a certain level of knowledge. Make sure to define words and jargon that may be common in some fields, not in others.
- Environment is an important factor for your presentations. Size of the room, lighting, equipment, tall ceilings, microphones and other outside influences.
- Consider the demographic and cultural makeup of the audience. Think about the language and reading levels that are in the room.

Five Items to Consider About Your Audience

- What are the specific needs of the audience?
- What is the attitude of the audience toward the topic?
- The knowledge and educational level of the audience is?
- Physical and psychological elements that might affect the audience is/was?
- Audience demographics that may impact the presentation include?

Clarify Your Message

SCIPAB is basically the elevator speech of your presentation. The foundation of a good presentation can be assembled with only six sentences.

SCIPAB Matrix

(S)ituation
(C)omplication
(I)mplication
(P)osition
(A)ction
(B)enefit

Situation

This sentence describes the present situation, adding your own insight and understanding of the topic. *Example: Opiate use mortality rates have increased ___% in the last two years.*

Complication

This sentence describes the challenges and drawbacks of the situation and other risks. The information can be new or controversial.

Example: Because of the growth of mortality rates we are authorizing a public health emergency.

Implication

This sentence considers the consequences to your audience of failing to act on the complications provided in the presentation. This is where we answer the “so what” question.

Example: If we don't activate a public health emergency the opiate crisis will continue.

Position

Tell the audience how you personally believe about the topic, it's your stance, your thesis, your belief. Be clear and brief and share early during the presentation. The audience deserves to know where you stand.

Example: I believe the public health emergency activation is the right thing to do.

Action

What do you want the audience to do, to believe or to understand?

Example: Please consider calling your elected officials in supporting the approval of a public health crisis about opiates.

Benefit

This is where we tell the audience what is in it for them if they do what we ask.

Example: By supporting the public health crisis declaration, the nation and our local community will receive additional resources to fight this growing societal problem.

Use the SCIPAB Method to open your presentation, be clear and reduce any confusion up front. To really press the importance of your collective message, talk about SCIPAB with no slide on the screen.

Plan the Main and Supporting Ideas

A key is to determine specific information areas you want to cover in your presentation. Using Post-It Notes that can be moved around and modified is best practice. Don't try to be perfect. Let the ideas flow and edit later. Develop ideas and then focus on specific content on what matters most to your audience. Put aside any ideas that don't relate to the audience, put those ideas in the handouts or include in an alternative setting.

Following the Rule of Three, this means organize your ideas around no more than three ideas, while building a logical flow with your ideas. Make sure to create connections between the main ideas that are meaningful to you as the presenter and the audience.

Develop Color Spots

Good content and presentation is not enough. The audience must have a reason to remember your message. Your message needs to be living and breathing. Many people call the concept adding color to the presentation, adding appropriate color helps the audience believe you are addressing their needs. Suggestions about adding color include:

- Use slides and other visuals but avoid complex graphics or word heavy charts. Save complicated visuals for your handouts.
- Plan for interaction, so consider using questions to help guide your audience with the points you want to make. If the audience is large use rhetorical questions.

- Story telling can be a strong connector to audiences of all sizes. Stories about your experiences or journeys are powerful, but need to be short and relevant. Just don't tell a personal story to tell a personal story.
- Using analogies helps the audience understand a new concept by relating it back to something that is already familiar to them. Keep those examples relevant.
- Humor is a very good rapport builder in many situations. Avoid telling jokes though, they can be easily misunderstood or offensive. If you ask yourself, "should I tell this joke or use this type of humor", don't do it!
- Refer to current events that directly relate to the presentation topic.
- Using quotes and statistics will help build respect with the audience, help create memorable experiences and add credibility. Use sparingly though and add context, just don't use quotes or statistics just to use them without explanation.

Finishing your presentation up strong is key and has two steps, reviewing the main idea covered for the audience and then restating the message using the PAB (position, action, benefit) portion of the SCIPAB Model.

"The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public."

-Geroge Jessel

Using Handouts, Things to Consider

Handouts are generally provided to:

- Provide the audience with a record of data provided during the presentation
- Reinforce important information
- Summarize action items for audience follow up
- Supply additional information and data that you don't want in your spoken presentation or slides

Before, During or After the Presentation: When to Hand Out?

For business presentations, the preferred method for handout distribution is before the event. Critics to this method fear that audience members will skip ahead reviewing the documents and not stay focused on the event. Others believe such skipping around is not the fault of the handout, but that of the presenter for not engaging the audience. A possible issue is when people read they tend not to listening, so one idea is to allow audience members to review handouts prior to the meeting and allowing ample to review.

A second option is handout distribution during the presentation. Distribution needs to occur fast and be relevant to the point you want to make. Otherwise confusion will reign.

The last option is to distribute at the end of the presentation. This approach works well with glossy photos or brochures that might distract from your message and not add to the core value.

“There are always three speeches, for every one you actually gave. The one you practiced, the one you gave, and the one you wish you gave.”

-Dale Carnegie

Best Practice Methods to Support Effective Delivery of Your Presentation with Energy and Composure

Use the following Checklist for Practicing Your Presentation

- Don't read from your slides, have a conversation with the audience, explain, expand or discuss the content. Your slides are not your presentation!
- Mentally run through the presentation to review each idea in sequence over and over until you know the flow of ideas and how each slide supports the ideas
- Begin stand-up rehearsals of your presentations. A recommendation is to practice in a room that is similar to where your event will be held
- Give a simulated presentation, idea for idea, but not word for word. Practice linking your ideas together to ensure appropriate flow
- Try to put as much focus on your audience as possible, try not to focus on your notes.
- Attempt to anticipate the questions that your audience may ask and practice answering the questions
- Give the full presentation again and video the practice. Mobile phone videos of your presentation are fine. Let your friends, family or co-workers help you with suggestions.

When You Can't Practice – Impromptu Speaking

We can't always plan for our presentations, but the SCIPAB (Situation, Complication, Implication, Position, Action, Benefit) Model can still help. Any topic can be split up into a pattern or flow. Consider the following suggestions:

- Discuss your topic via the lens of past, present, and future.
- Compare and contrast Topics 1, 2 and 3.
- Consider the pros and cons of the issue.

During formal presentations and impromptu opportunities, it is helpful to keep in mind some of the following ideas:

- Talk through each point from your preview sentence, try to provide a preview of your thinking.
- Acknowledge the oppositions view when speaking about something controversial, but finish with your viewpoint so you can end the speaking opportunity by summarizing your position.
- Always review your main points.
- Reinforce the main ideas that you have already discussed. Think of the power of three, repeating the same information in three different ways.
- Conclude the conversation, but don't leave folks hanging. Let them know what you believe and why, what you need them to do and next steps.

“It takes one hour of preparation time for each minute of presentation.”

-Wayne Burgraff

Find Your Energy and Composure

If you want your audience to trust you, true enthusiasm must be present in your presentation and presence. Enthusiasm, composure and confidence are hallmarks of effective public speaking. There is an old adage that “it’s not just what you say, but how you say it.” This old idea is just as true today as ever before.

When we stand stiff as a board with little movement while using a level speaking voice our presentation may fall on deaf ears no matter the level of importance or quality of content. Non-verbal actions frequently carry our feelings, and these true feelings are commonly transparent to our audiences whether they be only a few people or a room of 100.

A great benefit of being authentic, natural and animated is that nervous energy will leave your body faster. Your audience will also begin to believe that they can relate to you and your message. We must learn to be aware of not only what we are saying but also how we say it. Learn to be your own monitor and coach making improvements during, after and before each speaking opportunity.

Putting Energy to Work

Movement

Speakers typically stand in one spot, instead take an occasional step or two. Moving around will help reduce anxiety and engages the audience’s attention. See if these ideas help:

- Look at the person/group whom you are moving toward
- Then Move
- Finally, plant your feet and stop moving

Don’t keep moving, if you do some may think you are pacing.

If you are given a lectern to speak from try to get away from it if possible. Move to the sign or the front if appropriate. This requires planning if you are using a microphone, so an extension or lapel mic. In a formal presentation or if the lectern is at the head of the table, such ideas may be not possible. Stay within four to six feet within the front row.

When delivering the presentation, keep your body facing the audience as much as possible. This will help you keep eye contact with the audience. If using slides don't turn your body toward the presentation screen reading with your back to the audience. Try using a 45 degree angle. Don't speak to the slides, only speak when you are looking at people.

Gestures

Anxiety can hold back meaningful conversation. Anxiety frequently comes out with distracting gestures or physical habits. Develop goal of treating your audience as if you were having a conversation with a friend. Between gestures, simply relax your hands at your sides – do not hold them up in front of you with your arms bent at the elbow.

Make sure to avoid:

- Keeping hands in your pockets
- Keeping hands "handcuffed" behind your back
- Keeping your arms crossed
- Putting hand in a 'fig leaf' position (folding one hand over another, and letting the joined hands hang from the front of the lower body)
- Wringing your hands nervously

Voice

Stay aware of the volume of your voice. A soft voice may be perceived as showing a lack of confidence and hurt your credibility. Start with your breathing, breathe frequently and deeply. Vary your pitch, volume and pace as you do in a natural conversation or in storytelling. To help find out if you have a volume problem before a presentation, ask a person in the back of the room if they have trouble hearing you at any time during the event.

Have a Soft Voice? Recruit two friends to help you and find a room that is at least two times bigger than the size of room that you usually give presentations in. Have one person sit in the front row and another stand along the farthest back wall. Start speaking and have the person in the back of the room let you know when they can comfortably hear you. Note your volume level, see how it feels to you and ask the person in the front of the room about your volume. Were you too loud?

Anxiety drives changes in voice. When feeling anxiety, a monotone voice is frequently created. The speaker tightens up, the muscles in the chest and throat become less flexible and air flow is reduced. To bring back your normal speaking tone we need to relax and release the tension that is being built up. Upper and lower body movements help release tension. This movement does not have to be significant, just enough to help redirect the flow of energy.

Best Practices to Maintain Composure

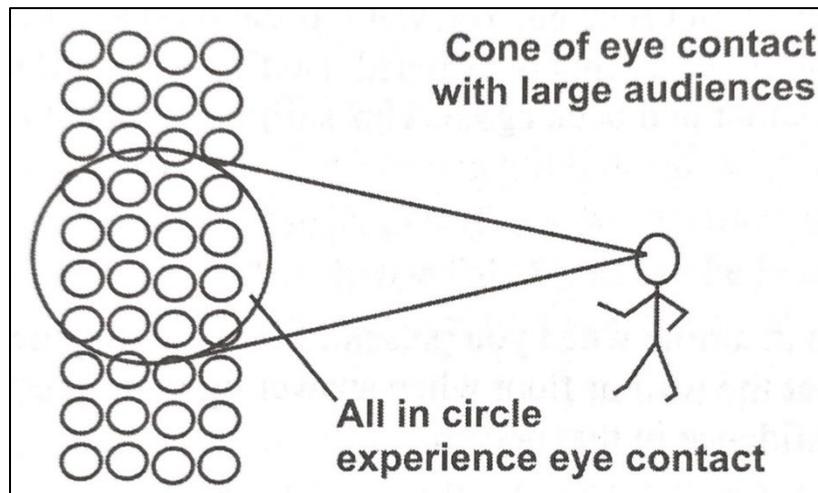
Posture

Keep your posture erect, but relaxed. Stand up straight without being stiff, with your weight evenly distributed. Don't place your weight on one hip and then shift back again.

Eye Contact

Speak to one person at a time when presenting. Can you imagine interviewing a person who looked at the wall or floor when answering your question? In American culture we expect good, direct eye contact. Yet too many times the speaker will look at a spot on the back of the wall or at the screen or notes – everywhere but in the eyes of the audience. Note: Eye Contact is a cultural variable, so always find out what the audience is comfortable with if you are presenting in a culture outside your own.

Effective eye contact opens a new channel of communication between people. Good eye contact relaxes the speaker by connecting the speaker to the audience and reducing the speaker's feeling of isolation. A good rule of thumb for eye contact is three to five seconds per person while avoiding darting your eyes around the room. Try to focus on one person, not long enough to make that individual feel uncomfortable, but long enough to pull him or her into the presentation. Then move on to the next person. If you have a large group, make eye contact with different parts of the room and audience.



Pace

When we get nervous we talk faster, this makes the speaker look even more nervous. Of course, when we start speaking rapidly, audience members will miss out on important points since their cognitive brain will not be able to keep up. When we are tripping over words, we are talking too fast – this is an internal sign to slow down. Listen to yourself say the last word of a sentence, pause where the period should be and then proceed to the next sentence. Slow down and make sure to use a conversational approach.

How to Use Pauses

Pauses can help emphasize points for the audience to consider and help slow you down when you are nervous. Don't be afraid to use silence during the presentation.

Q & A Techniques

Most presentations include time for the audience to ask questions and in most cases the speaker has the option of when to have questions asked. If appropriate, have the audience ask questions during the event if you feel comfortable or to save their questions until the end of the event. If you are delivering technical information or complicated ideas or when leading a training session, it's a good idea to check audience understanding by asking and taking questions.

Asking "Any Questions" does not encourage questions from the audience. Alternative ways to encourage audience interaction is "Does anyone have questions for me?" or "What questions do you have?" Make sure to pause long enough to allow the audience to develop and express their questions (5 to 8 seconds). When responding to questions, make sure not to interrupt the person asking the question, notice their body language, feelings or hidden agendas. When listening, be careful what you do with your hands. Make sure you appear open and welcoming of the question, while attempting to make the person asking the question be the center of your immediate attention.

Other hints:

- Be prepared for questions, practice answering them in advance. Prepare for the worst and use visual aids when possible to address the concern(s)
- Don't preface your answer by saying "That's a very good question: I'm glad you asked it". Such statements may be a sign that you are unsure of the answer. If you are unsure say so, but don't dance around the issue
- If a question is long or complex, restate it for clarification. Clarifying may also provide the opportunity to soften perceived hostile language and provide more time to consider an appropriate response
- Make sure to repeat questions posed for the audience who may not initially hear it.
- Maintain your speaking style. When answering questions, answer them in the flow of your natural speaking style. If you change your speaking approach to a specific or series of questions the change in approach may suggest you are unhappy about the question asked.
- Be honest. If you don't know, say you don't know and will help find an answer. Make sure to follow up with the individual and entire group when appropriate
- Involve the Audience. When questions are being asked don't ignore the rest of the audience
- Follow the 25%-75% Rule. Direct 25% of your eye contact to the person who asked the question and 75% to the rest of the audience

- Keep your answers to the point. Don't belabor an issue. Make your answer long enough to cover the subject, but short enough to be interesting

How to Deal with Hostile Questions

Sometimes people in your audience may appear upset or angry at you or the topic being presented. It is one of the most difficult situations you will face. Consider a three-step approach:

1. Align
2. Respond
3. Maintain

Align: Acknowledge Feelings and/or Facts

Don't get defensive, when you do, you lose. Avoid saying something like "I understand you're upset, but..." It is best to use the questioner's own language and avoid saying "but". "But" tend to negate everything that came before it.

Respond: Respond with Information

Explain what happened using the facts of the situation – remove a sense of emotion or opinion.

Maintain: Maintain Your Position

Make sure to restate your original position, action or benefits of your argument.

