**Educate to Advocate: Public Speaking**

Presented by Heather Edwards: April 17, 2019

# **Comfortable and Effective Speaking**

* Pressure can be different depending on expectations, familiarity with the audience, and familiarity with your material.
* [Toastmasters](https://www.toastmasters.org/): a not-for-profit program teaching public speaking skills, the program is self-paced and provides a safe, supportive environment to receive feedback on your public speaking.

# **General speaking tips**

* Speak with confidence. Pay attention to your posture and face your audience.
* Vocal variety. Use rate of speech and tone, as well as a mixture of sentence lengths, to keep the audience interested.
* Facial expressions. Make sure your facial expressions match your content.
* Word choice. Create a picture with your words so the audience will know the impact of your ask.
* Use a natural speaking voice but make sure your voice carries for a larger audience, speak from the diaphragm.

# **Power of the Pause**

* **Don’t rush**. If you’ve told a funny story or made a compelling point, pause to give the audience a chance to react.

# **When speaking to a larger crowd**

* It’s not about you; it’s about the content. The audience has come because they’re interested in your message.
* You’re the only one who knows your presentation’s material. You’re the one in charge of communicating the material to your audience.

# **Crafting Your Message: Preparing for a presentation**

* Prepare your message. Make sure it has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
* Language. Use language that creates a compelling image or idea for your audience.
* Introduction. Clarify the topic and content of your presentation, a rhetorical question can get your audience thinking about your material.
* Body. 3 to 5 main points you will expand on, these should be the key points you want your audience to remember.
* Be concise. Too many points will be too much for the audience to retain in a short amount of time.
* Conclusion. Make sure your message is impactful by including the most important things for your audience to take away. Don’t add additional material in your conclusion. If you forgot to cover something, you’re the only one who knows. Finish with confidence - don’t apologize.
* Memorize your opening and closing remarks, as well as your main points. This will give you confidence even if you’re nervous or can’t look at your notes. Memorizing the intro and conclusion also allows you to look at your audience, creating a visual connection for them.
* Timing. Because you have an outline, you’ll be able to summarize your message even when you have less time

# **Knowing your audience**

* Plan for the amount of time you’ve been given but be aware that you may end up with less time in some situations.
* Know your highest priority “ask” or message: for situations when your audience has less time than expected to listen to you.
* Knowing the type of audience will help you decide whether a longer speech or an “elevator pitch” is most appropriate.
* Do you want to inform your audience, persuade your audience, or both?
* Avoid using jargon your audience may not be familiar with. If you have to use it, explain it.
* Be respectful of the amount of time you’ve been given.
* Don’t fill in too much detail that takes away from your main message.
* Personal stories can help you engage with an audience but limit these depending on your audience.

## **Speaking with persuasion**

* Know your ask. What is it you want your audience to do?
* What’s in it for them. Show them why they benefit from your idea.
* What will happen as a result. Show them what the consequences will be.
* How will they do it? Show them how they can work with you.
* What resources are available and how can the audience access them?

# **Speaking to politicians and government staff**

* Politicians’ schedules can change quickly, and they often have limited time.

# **Seeking accommodations**

* Phrase your requests so your audience can understand what is needed.
* Be clear and concise even in highly intense situations when advocating for yourself or others.
* Be concise and persuasive with potential allies and donors.

# **Logistics**

* Know the setup of your presentation space. If you are blind, knowing the layout and whether there are steps will be helpful.
* Will there be Q and A at the end? Do you have a plan to manage this process if you are blind?
* Have a plan to deal with slides or other presentation materials.
* Practice alone and with others to increase your confidence, make sure your presentation fits the allotted time.
* “What If?" It’s hard to anticipate everything that could happen, but stay calm and know your material so you can make any situation work.

# **Memory Aids**

* Knowing your introduction, main points, and the conclusion is helpful - but memorizing the whole presentation word for word can make your delivery seem forced.
* Use mnemonics. An acronym can help you recall main points without reading.
* Use a format you’re comfortable with for notes. Make sure any equipment you need is charged and functioning ahead of time.

# **External Resources**

* [Orai Communication Coaching App](https://www.orai.com/): an app that identifies filler words, speech that’s too fast or slow, and other factors to help improve your delivery (for best results with VoiceOver, use headphones)
* [Chicago Lighthouse: Tips for Public Speaking as a Person with Vision Loss](https://chicagolighthouse.org/sandys-view/tips-for-public-speaking/)