

# PLANNING AND GIVING A PRESENTATION

## THE BIG PICTURE

- Navigators and peer support specialists are often asked to speak to groups of various sizes.
- Some people are uncomfortable speaking to groups or are not sure how best to give a presentation.
- Planning a presentation in advance and following a few simple guidelines can help you speak to groups effectively.

## CONSIDER YOUR TOPIC, AUDIENCE, AND PURPOSE

When planning a presentation, it is important to think about your topic as it relates to the group you will be speaking to and what you are trying to achieve.

Some topics are fairly simple and easy to explain to a wide variety of people. If your topic is more complicated and requires you to use specific technical terms or more complex language, the level of familiarity your audience has with that topic becomes much more important.

If you will be presenting to people you work with or those with a good understanding of the topic, you may not need much of an introduction and can go straight to discussing technical details. But with current or potential clients, public officials, or the general public—in other words, people who might not be familiar with the topic—use words and terms that they will understand; avoid using jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations. With an audience that does not know much about the topic, you will need to provide more detail and take the time to explain unfamiliar information.

You will also need to consider the purpose of your presentation. If, for example, you are trying to

persuade potential clients to accept services from your organization, your presentation will need to explain what you are asking them to do and how it may help them.

Having a clear picture of your topic, audience, and purpose will help you plan a presentation that meets your audience's needs and supports your purpose.

## PLANNING AND PREPARING TO SPEAK

Planning and preparing your presentation in advance is helpful, even if you are already comfortable speaking to groups.

Start by writing an outline for your presentation. It is usually better to speak from an outline than to write out the entire presentation and read it word for word. Speaking from an outline sounds more natural.

Begin the outline by listing no more than three key points that explain the purpose of the presentation. For example, if you are speaking about your organization's work, the key points might be how and why the organization was formed, what services it provides and whom it serves, and how it benefits clients and the community. Beneath each key point, write a few sentences or brief comments to explain that point.

If you use visual aids, such as PowerPoint slides, keep them simple and uncluttered. It is usually best to use dark text on a light background. Photos and illustrations can be helpful, but do not include so many that they distract from your message. Avoid sound effects, unusual fonts, or other elements that might distract people from the information you are sharing. Be sure to include any necessary logos, website addresses, and contact information.

*Continued on reverse*

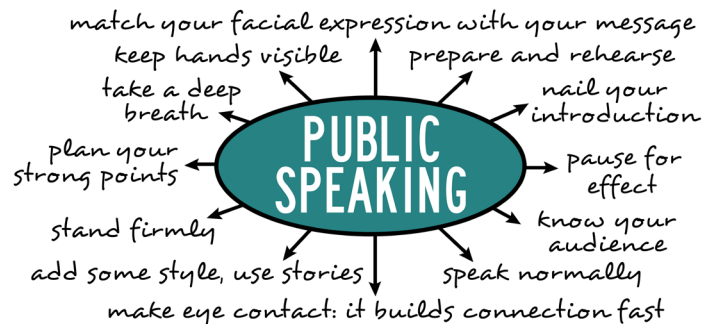
Finally, practice your presentation either alone or in front of one or two people you feel comfortable with. They can tell you what went well and what you might improve. As you practice, make sure your presentation fits within the time available.

## DELIVERING YOUR PRESENTATION

When speaking to a group, speak slightly slower than you would during a normal conversation. This gives people time to hear and understand what you are saying. Stand or sit with good posture and try to avoid fidgeting. If you are speaking from a podium or sitting behind a table, resting your hands on the

podium or table can help keep them still. Use natural hand gestures and changes in your tone of voice to emphasize key points.

If you feel nervous about speaking to a group, take a few slow, deep breaths before you begin. Find a couple of friendly faces in the group and focus on speaking to them rather than thinking about the group as a whole. Focus on the message you want to deliver rather than on yourself. Finally, remember that the people in your audience want you to succeed.



### THE FIVE CS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Five important ideas can help you prepare and deliver an effective presentation. They are:

- **Clarity:** Keep your presentation simple. Use plain language and avoid technical terms whenever possible.
- **Conciseness:** Keep your presentation brief. Cut unnecessary words and avoid repeating the same point.
- **Confidence:** Prepare and practice your presentation in advance, then deliver it with calm body language and a steady voice.
- **Credibility:** Support your key points with facts and evidence to build trust.
- **Connection:** Look at the people in your audience and consider their needs. Why are they listening to you? When they know you care, they are more likely to pay close attention to what you say.

### PUBLIC SPEAKING RESOURCES

Effective Public Speaking: 8 Techniques to Improve Your Public Speaking Skills—<https://online.utpb.edu/about-us/articles/communication/the-art-of-effective-public-speaking-8-techniques-to-improve-your-speaking-skills>

Public Speaking Tips for Beginners—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5mYphUoOCs>

The Secret to Great Public Speaking—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT2q1YKZQPE>



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