Presentation skills

Presenting information clearly and effectively is a key skill working in healthcare. No matter what part of the health sector you work in, from time to time you're probably going to need to do a presentation and this can often be a daunting prospect.

Preparation is key and to help you prepare, this range of relevant and helpful information to assist in your presentation development.

Presenting at a conference or workshop

- Writing a Brief Biography (100 words) for introduction onto the stage and for the conference booklet.
  - Establish your credentials – formal and informal credentials
  - Showcase your expertise – books and articles you published; awards you received.
  - Highlight you- review your lists of credentials and expertise, identifying which are the most impressive to your target audience.
  - Keep it short and simple – should be one or two paragraphs long, depending on how extensive your accomplishments are.

- PowerPoint presentation – should be used as a back-up to highlight key points from your presentation rather than as a word-for-word presentation tool.

- Try to keep PowerPoint's simple and uncluttered and with minimal graphics.

- Be aware that small detailed graphs or images may be difficult to read at the back of the conference auditorium.
  - Final slide which state the 'top 3 takeaways' to conclude the session.
  - Conferences may state the screen format for the slides.

The standard presentation length is 30-35 minutes with 5-10 minutes allocated at the end of the presentation session.

Prepare 1-2 questions for the chair to use as a prompt at the end of your presentation.

Bring a back-up copy of your presentation to the event in case of a technical malfunctions that my occur during the course of the event.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR SPEAKING:

Refer to the outline of your session on the printed program or the topic you have been asked to present on, prior to beginning to write your presentation. If you intend to change / amend the focus of your presentation, please discuss with the conference producer to ensure your presentation will meet the expectations of the conference audience

- Be aware that lighter colours in PowerPoint may not show up clearly on the screen. The same applies to smaller font sizes and graphs / pictures.

- Please keep to time and let the chairperson know if you require a prompt when your time is nearly up. If you think your presentation may be shorter or longer than anticipated, please notify the conference director as soon as you arrive at the conference

- Please introduce yourself to the chairperson when you arrive onsite

- Please be aware that delegates do not have a printed copy of your presentation in most instances. Any presentations not provided prior to the conference are shared with the audience post the event, with your permission.

- Let the chairperson know ahead of time if you have any special technical requirements for your presentation.

- Please call ahead if you are running late / stuck in traffic so that the conference director can alleviate any problems that may arise due to this and be aware of the situation.

- Try to attend as much of the event as you can. The audience will enjoy having the opportunity to ask you questions and interact with you during the breaks as well as during your presentation.

- Provide your presentation to the Event Manager in advance of the conference so it can be loaded onto the website, shared with all delegates.

Presentation skills

Most presenters feel nervous about giving a presentation, but success comes with preparation and practice.

A good presentation requires:

- speaking clearly and confidently
- convincing the audience your subject is important
- presenting your information in a logical and interesting way
- answering questions from the audience
- managing a discussion afterwards.

Take the time to prepare – this is probably one of the steps that is skipped in the process. Take the time to prepare and research your subject matter and ensure you have the latest information for your presentation.

What is the objective, subject, audience, place, time of day and also the length of your presentation so you can deliver it effectively?

Who are the audience? What is their background – general or specialist? Will they be familiar with your topic and understand specialist language? Or will they need to have matters expressed in relatively simple lay terms? Is there something they really need to know?

Organise your information logically – Now you're probably aware of what you're going to say; so now figure out how you want to say it. Select the ideas you want to convey and the main points you want to share with your audience. Decide if you are going to use video, info graphics or any multimedia and then plan your introduction and conclusion.

Write your presentation – your presentation will probably be written, rewritten and edited before you're happy with the final product. Take the time to ensure you address the 'why', the 'how' and the 'what' your audience is interested in finding out and ensure your presentation follows a logical format. If you're audience know very little about the subject matter, would they understand the content and the key messages?

Make notes so you can ensure you get your point across – presentation platforms such as PowerPoint and Prezi allow presenters access to a notes section which enables the presenter to add in personal notes to assist during the presentation. While it is not recommended to read these notes verbatim, it is a handy tool to encourage flow and consistency during the presentation.

You'll also need to make some decisions around the presentation method which may include PowerPoint, Prezi or a range of other presentation mediums, which are suitable for group presentations.

As well as this, if you are working with videos or visual aids, be sure to do a run through before your audience arrives to ensure everything is working correctly and if you're using the Internet to stream footage that this is not buffering or affecting the flow of the demonstration.

Tips for presenting

- Know your audience and write accordingly.
- Presentation is heard and not read – audiences have short/limited attention spans.
- Keep the content simple and straight forward.
- Explain any technical terms and jargon used.
- Provide a quick recap of points whenever needed.
- Follow the time limits
- Rehearse in front of a friend or in front of a mirror. As mentally reading your paper never corresponds to the time it actually takes to read it aloud in front of an audience.
- Start confidently – the first 10-20 seconds will mark whether or not you are able to gain the audience's attention, how you begin your presentation matters a great deal.
- Maintain eye contact – talk to your audience, be clear, loud and energetic. Gaze around the room from time to time, to convey that you are confident in what you are saying.
- Use timely pauses to your advantage – give your audience time to process and react to what you are saying or give yourself a chance to catch your breath.
- Maintain a steady pace, not too fast.
- Use transitions – filler words used to assist you to move from one idea to another; furthermore, in addition, consequently, meanwhile, finally, a similar idea is/an example is, there are reasons the first being …
- Closing – answer questions and thank audience for attending.
- Do not worry if no questions are asked.

Conference/workshop panellist

The role of the panellist is to present their professional opinion and / or personal experience; highlighting examples of how their organisation or they have successfully managed the topic that is being addressed.

This experience should include a combination of the following: lessons learned, best practice tips, practical advice and potential obstacles. This will enable the audience to engage with the panel discussion and be involved in / learn from their experience.

The standard panel discussion is 30–45 minutes in length. This usually constituting a 5-minute introduction from the chairperson, a 2–3 minute introduction from each panel member, and then 20–25 minutes of questions and answers from the audience / floor.

- Consider the topic of the panel discussion in advance and what comments you wish to make for your 2-3-minute introduction to yourself and your opinion on the chosen topic.

- Create a couple of questions that relate to your experience around the chosen topic. These can be used as a prompt for the chair to ask you (if questions are not forthcoming initially from the audience).

References:

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