

## **Successful Presentations: Tips for Presenters, Trainers and Teachers**

- The best presenters are passionate about their topics, warm, and good humored.
- Setting "norms" for behaviors, particularly for a workshop over three hours, really helps people get and stay on the same page in terms of expectations for each other. Offer one or two norms to start and allow the group to contribute to the rest. You don't need many, but the group should be part of the creation process.
- Make training objectives absolutely clear in the description of the activity. Participants want to know what they will learn; conversely, they do not like going to a workshop only to find it was not what they expected from the description.
- Have a clearly written synopsis and learning objectives. Review this at the beginning of the workshop so everyone is on the same page and knows what to expect from the workshop. Ask participants at the beginning what they are hoping to get from the presentation. Continue to state the learning objectives clearly throughout the presentation.
- Develop public speaking and presentation skills. Many books are available on public speaking and presenting workshops including tips on everything from how to be a more dynamic speaker to suggestions on the type of white board pens to use.
- Realize that certain topics have a shelf life and may only be interesting to participants in certain places at certain times.
- Break down the content into organized and understandable chunks.
- Handouts...tell them what they will learn, then teach them, then remind them of what they just learned; the learning cycle is complete when they have shared or taught this information to another.
- Make your message clear. This includes enunciating (whether you're signing or speaking), printing clearly when you use flipcharts or other writing, and using readable fonts and sufficient white space in your handouts.
- Help the participants answer the question: "What's in it for me to be here?"
- Practice giving your presentation. Go through all your slides/overheads and make sure what you are saying fits.
- Recognize that participants have different learning preferences. Some will prefer a lecture-type environment, while others prefer hands-on practice. If possible structure your workshop to include a mixture of both.
- Recognize that participants have different learning styles -- auditory, visual, or kinesthetic. Strive to provide visual aids and hands-on practice along with verbal (or signed) presentation whenever possible. Incorporate all learning styles into the presentation. Just touching on each will increase the expected outcome.
- Allow everyone to be heard. Build in time to the presentation for questions and comments.
- Allow for open dialogue. This creates a feeling of contribution from the participants and validation of the experience they bring to the others attending.
- Listen to people's comments and be open minded.

- Re-state and clarify if not sure of the point being made by a participant.
- Don't let people's questions get your workshop too off track...set-up a parking lot for issues that are not relevant or held for another time.
- Stay on target for the goal of the presentation but yet flexible to handle tangential topic.
- Be honest with your audience, if you don't know something, admit it...then ask what they think.
- Feel free to say "I'll get back to you with that information" and collect contacts. It's better to admit you don't know and get back to someone later than to stumble through an incomplete or incorrect answer.
- Share your own mistakes. When participants understand that the presenter is fallible, they often feel a bond.
- Be willing to model what you ask of participants.
- Use three step processes that has participants (1) try a task, (2) work with some resource which gives them new perspectives/skills, and then (3) have them try the task again.
- Use a blend of activities that allows people to move around (not just sit all day). Provide discovery time without straight lecture.
- Check your equipment – before you get to the site if possible, or at least arrive early enough to troubleshoot.
- Presenter must be able to handle breakdowns in equipment....have back-up resources ready and available.
- Have someone assigned to help you throughout. You should not have to worry about setting up technology, handouts, etc. Your attention needs to be focused on your workshop, having someone there as your 'assistant' is a great help.
- Be prepared: Have your PowerPoint presentation or videos tested ahead of time and set videos so they are ready to go.
- Do not read your handouts or PowerPoint to the audience. Show the slide, talk about what is there then talk about what the take away point is.
- When using PowerPoint, don't use lots of different fonts and animations. Just a few make more of an impact than if you have something jazzy on each slide.
- Breaks are important for presenter and participants! Make sure breaks are long enough for people to move around, go to the bathroom and relax.
- Don't present in ASL unless you are native or have near-native skills and/or the topic you are presenting on dictates the use of ASL.
- Workshops presented by deaf individuals should be voiced for participants, unless the workshop is only for certified interpreters and at a level where it is known all participants can easily learn w/out having it voiced.
- Leave enough time to meet with your interpreters and email them your outline prior to your presentation.
- Check in at the mid-way point to see how things are going. What is going well? Not so well?
- Start on time and finish with time for them to fill out their evaluations, etc before the scheduled end of the workshop.
- Bring closure to the workshop by

- Assigning homework (challenge everyone to be accountable to the profession by being life-long learners).
  - Connecting people with people and resources (never leave anyone stranded – proffer The Next Step).
- Wrap-up: Remind them what we learned today.
- Encourage ongoing learning about the topic after the workshop by providing handouts, lists of references/suggested readings, and/or strategies for further practice.
- Get a participant evaluation at the end of the training. This will help a great deal when either giving this presentation again or planning a different one. Ask for feedback and then be flexible enough to incorporate it.