

# Presentation Tips

Ease your presentation anxiety with these 5 tips!

## 1) Practice, practice, practice!

Practice your entire presentation in front of a trusted person - family, friends - and record it. Play back the recording and take notes the following:

- **Vocal quality:** Did your voice sound hoarse or gravelly? Or did it sound smooth and clear?
- **Vocal pitch:** Did you vary the pitch of your voice so that you sounded engaging? Or did you speak in monotone?
- **Speech fluency:** Were there any sections of the presentation that were more difficult to say or get through? Were there any specific words that were challenging to pronounce?
- **Face/Body posture:** Were you standing up straight? Did you constantly shift from side to side? Where were you looking - down at your notes or up at the crowd? Did you look at all sides of the room or just straight in front of you?
- **Facial expressions:** Were your facial expressions appropriate for the content of your presentation? Did you look enthusiastic or energetic? Or did you maintain a static expression the entire time?
- **Arm/Hand gestures:** If you didn't have a podium on which to rest your arms, what were they doing? Were they straight at your sides like a soldier? Or did you move them around?



## 2) Warm up your voice

Any time you are going to speak, it is wise to warm up your voice just like you would warm up your body before exercising. Visit the "Resources" page on my website for a **full-length, free resource on Vocal Warm ups**.

## 3) Take control of your breathing and heart rate

When we feel stress or anxiety, the result is that our heart rate and breathing increase and our muscles contract, preparing us to either "attack" or "flee". Neither of these responses are good when you are about to give a speech! Try this easy breathing exercise to take control of your breathing, which will in turn bring down your heart rate and help you feel more relaxed: **The 4-7-8 breathing technique**.

- Breathe in for 4 seconds
- Hold your breath for 7 seconds
- Exhale slowly for 8 seconds

You can breathe in through your nose or mouth, whatever feels comfortable. Do the sequence 2-3 times.

#### 4) Calm your voice with this easy trick

I learned this from a fellow speech-language pathologist, Jackie Gartner-Schmidt. **To calm your voice and help re-establish good airflow**, try the following:

- Take a few deep breaths
- Say the vowel “ooo” with an open, breathy voice (relax your throat)
- Wag your pointer finger in front of your mouth as you say “ooo” and feel the airflow
- Do this 5-10 times before speaking



#### 5) Remember - the audience is on *your* side

- I think we sometimes forget that the audience is there to hear what we have to say. They don't want us to fail - they genuinely want to learn the information that is in our presentation. Otherwise, they wouldn't be there.
- Trust that the audience is there to **support you**, and remember that they most likely feel the exact same way that you do when it's their turn to talk in front of a crowd.

Thanks for reading! Contact me at [juliecunninghamslp@gmail.com](mailto:juliecunninghamslp@gmail.com) for more help with overcoming presentation anxiety!

*\*\* As a disclaimer - you know your body better than I do. Please monitor the way your body feels. If you have pain or any health limitations that impact your ability to complete these exercises safely, please do not do them. None of these exercises should hurt or be painful, so if you feel pain or dizziness - stop!\*\**