



3. PUBLIC SPEAKING? NO FEAR!

Many people are terrified by speaking in front of a group. Most of us feel stressed at the thought but speaking before groups does not have to be nerve-racking.

Here are some suggestions to help you fight anxiety – and deliver an effective presentation:

Preparation: Research your subject fully. Then, think about professional and personal experiences of your own to tie to the topic – it's much easier to speak confidently from a personal perspective. Make sure you also support your ideas with strong evidence. That increases credibility with your audience.

Indexing: Put your main points or ideas down on small index cards and build your talk from these. Otherwise, you'll fall into the trap of reading to your audience which weakens the connection. Of course, there are occasions when writing a speech makes sense, like when there are complex policies or legal issues involved – still, write like you talk.

Close with Action: How you close your talk leaves a lasting impression on your audience. Ensure your session's closing reflects the purpose of your presentation – and gives your audience a strong sense of direction.

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The Higher Education series offers weekly insights on improving public communication skills