



Presenting When Presenting Isn't Your Specialty

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I am sure you have heard the saying “those that can’t do teach.” When in reality those who can, are often cajoled or forced into teaching or presenting, then have a miserable experience and never try again! Perhaps by virtue of your role, or even your boss’s assumptions of your knowledge, it may be assumed you are just the person to do a particular presentation. You are flattered, but reluctant. Present in front of everyone!!! The thought may bring on sweaty palms and or even the beginning of a panic attack. Relax! Here is some advice that can help you through your presentation experience.

First, know exactly what is expected of you. What are the objectives or expected outcome of the presentation? It is your responsibility to know what you are being asked to do. To be sure you know, ask these questions:

- What is the focus or topic of the presentation? Is it broad or very specific?
- How much time will you have? 1 hour versus 10 minutes is quite a difference.
- How much information have you been asked to cover? Is it an overview or a comprehensive presentation?
- Is it realistic given the time allotted? Remember, everything is negotiable.
- Who is your audience? New hires, highly experienced clinicians, the public?

After getting the answers to these questions it is time to identify and create a plan to conquer your fears. Most novice presenters are fearful about speaking in public or with certain audiences, but you may have a specific fear that is getting in the way. Often just identifying that fear can at best eliminate it or at least reduce it. Don’t forget that one of the best ways to decrease fear is to know your material.

Finally, be enthusiastic! Even if you are uncomfortable presenting at first, let your passion for the topic show through. Your audience will sense and hear your enthusiasm and they will be more inclined to forgive any nervousness you may have. Plus, the more passionate you become with your subject, the more relaxed you will become. You may find that presenting is a valuable and rewarding experience.