Tips for presentation nerves

It is completely normal to feel nervous before a presentation. Many experienced presenters such as lecturers, politicians and business people feel nervous even if they have given presentations many times before.

Prepare and rehearse

You will feel much better about your presentation if you have a really clear idea about what you are going to say, and have practised.

- Give yourself plenty of time to plan your presentation carefully. Having great content will give you confidence.
- Practise your presentation a number of times: actually give your talk in front of a mirror, as well to friends or family members.
- Make sure you know where you are presenting, and what facilities are available there. Go to the room if you are not familiar with it.
- Make sure you have practised using the equipment and the software. And make sure you have a back-up plan, as equipment can fail.
- Consider talking to a WAI Learning Advisor about your content and to practise your presentation.
- If you are really anxious, a WAI Counsellor can give you some strategies to help deal with this.

On the day

Exercise

A walk in the park or other exercise before you need to present can reduce anxiety and stress.

Arrive early

Don’t increase stress by having to rush, so plan to be there slightly early.

Drink water

Have some water to sip as your present. You may get a dry mouth.

Practise deep breathing

Adrenalin can cause shallow breathing. Get the oxygen your brain needs and calm yourself with a few deep breaths.

Pause

Before you start talking, pause, make eye contact and smile. This will give you a moment to relax and connect with your audience. Use the same technique at appropriate times during your talk.

Smile

It will make you and your audience feel more comfortable and relaxed.

Remember your audience supports you

It is rare for audiences to be highly critical; mostly you’ll be addressing your classmates who will be supportive. They have been, or will be in the same situation.

Make eye contact

Eye contact with friendly or sympathetic people in the audience can be easier than looking at the whole group.

This page uses material adapted from the following useful resources:
