

/How to speak on a stage

WELCOME! This document is adapted from Jack.org's many resources to train and equip young leaders to take action for mental health across Canada. We're thrilled to be sharing our learnings externally with this resource.

Objectives:

- To make your presentations more engaging and memorable for the audience
- To increase awareness of how you're using your body and voice intentionally to enhance the main messages of your presentation
- To increase connection with the audience and make the messages relevant

EYE CONTACT - *Connecting with others*

Even though you're on a stage, talk to the audience like you'd talk to anyone in person.

Some tips:

- look toward the audience
- make sure you seem awake - eyes wide open. This will make you seem more interested and passionate

GESTURES - *Use hands intentionally*

Standing still with your arms at your sides would be boring. Try to:

- talk with your hands, just don't overdo it
- use gestures strategically and to illustrate important points
- avoid fidgeting and nervous gestures, (e.g. playing with your hair)



MOVEMENT - *Move with purpose*

You're standing on a stage, so use the space! Just make sure it's used with intention. Tips:

- Be purposeful about movement. Take some steps to show distance, or step back and forth to make different points.
- Walking around on stage can be engaging, especially if you use it to draw attention. I.e. walk to a certain spot and come to a full stop to emphasize a key point.

VOICE: VOLUME, PACE, AND TONE - *How you say it matters*

You could be talking about the most fascinating subject in the world, but if you speak in a quiet monotone drone, the audience won't care - they'll just tune out.

Volume and projection:

- **Project your voice!**
 - Make it big and loud enough to carry across a room but don't yell.
 - Put power behind your voice to make sure it resonates with the audience.

Speed, pace, and pauses:

- **Watch your speed:**
 - Talks should always be given at a *slightly* slower than natural pace
 - It helps to listen to yourself doing a presentation, then see how fast you speak. Are you getting your thoughts across clearly?
- **Pauses are powerful**
 - It's especially important to pause after saying key points or powerful statements. It may seem awkward, but it gives the audience a chance to absorb messages
 - You may feel like pauses last forever and are boring – not true! They keep your audience hanging onto your words

Tone of voice

- **Show emotion with your voice**
 - Be aware of the tone you are using when speaking - the emotion in it and how that impacts the way your audience feels (sounds excited to get them excited)
 - Different parts of your presentation will require you to adjust your tone of voice

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE - *Make it relevant to everyone*

Remember that your experience is only **one of many**. How can you make the messages resonate with as many people as possible?

- Use “I” and “me” statements. “In my experience...” “This is how I felt...” “It really affected me when...” “This is what worked for me...” “I learned that...”
- Avoid absolute statements that involve words like: “always,” “never,” or “everyone.” Instead, leave it open by using words like: “sometimes,” “often,” etc.
- When motivating the audience to take action, use “we” instead of “you.” “We can change this conversation, we can make a difference, we can be the generation without stigma.”

AUTHENTICITY - *Make it your own*

The most powerful speakers are those who are not afraid to be themselves on stage, to be open and honest and candid.

- We cannot hammer this message enough - **use your own words, be a real person on stage, personalize the talk with your experiences.**

For public speaking, practice makes perfect! Practice your tone, speed, and gestures while telling stories to your friends and you'll get it in no time!

ACTIVITY – Practice Makes Perfect

Go to a random question generator online and click generate three times. Whatever your favourite is of the three questions, write it down. Then, without planning what you are going to say, hit record on your camera and start talking about/answering the question. Go for 60 seconds, play it back and evaluate yourself.

Try it again and keeping doing this repeatedly until you feel confident enough to practice with friends and/or family members. Have them give you feedback as well. By the end, determine your top two strengths and top two areas of improvement that you can focus on moving forward.