

10 Tips for Successful Public Speaking

According to the *Book of Lists*, the fear of speaking in public is the top fear of all fears. It is reported that more than 41% of people have some fear or anxiety dealing with speaking in front of groups. Mark Twain said it best, “*There are two types of speakers: those that are nervous and those that are liars.*”

Feeling some nervousness before giving a presentation is natural and even beneficial. But too much nervousness can be detrimental. Here are some proven tips for how to control your butterflies and give better public presentations:

1. **Know your material.**
Know the patient's diagnosis, transplant journey details and have the Children's Organ Transplant Association facts memorized, or close at hand, during any public speaking opportunity.
2. **Practice. Practice. Practice.**
Write any public presentation and then make sure the patient and/or the family is comfortable with the information to be shared. Practice your presentation by yourself and for others to work out the kinks and to get more familiar with it.
3. **Know the audience.**
Ask who will be in audience when accepting an invitation to speak (ages, interests, etc.). Then greet audience members as they arrive at the presentation. It is easier to speak to a group of friends than to strangers.
4. **Know the room.**
Arrive at the presentation site early to set up your materials. Make sure the microphone, and any other audio or visual aids, are all working properly and that you know how to operate them.
5. **Relax.**
The goal is to turn your nervous energy into enthusiasm for upcoming COTA community campaign events and express the passion you feel for the patient and this COTA fundraising effort.
6. **Visualize yourself giving your presentation.**
Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and confident. Your conviction for the patient and the family should be clearly evident.
7. **Realize the audience wants you to succeed.**
No one in the audience is looking for your mistakes -- or cheering if you make one. They want to hear your message, so focus on that, not on you.
8. **Do not apologize for any nervousness.**
Most of the time, a speaker's nervousness does not show at all so if you do not say anything about it. Nobody will notice -- and nobody will care.
9. **Concentrate on the message.**
Think about the patient and the family at all times. This will keep the message at the forefront of the presentation. Express your emotions.
10. **Gain experience.**
Most beginning speakers find their anxieties decrease after each presentation they give. As you begin, you can help your nerves by practicing in advance and having notes to glance at during the presentation to keep you on track. *Every presentation after the first one will get easier!*