

COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 15

How Friends and Families Can Coach Speakers

Public speakers can always use time to practice and it helps when the audience is kind and supportive.

If the speaker doesn't mind, friends and family members can be great resources to provide more opportunities to practice. At the same time, speakers should always guide the focus for practice and should not be forced into a direction that is contrary to their needs.

These ideas are intended to illustrate a few starting points for friends and families.

<p>Support that doesn't require actual speaking practice....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral Support. Public speakers of any age can always benefit from a confidence boost. As a friend or family member, you personally know their insecurities and worries, so you are in the ideal position to let them know you will be there for them, no matter what. • Practice Plan Accountability. Public speakers should have a plan for getting ready, either from their coach or themselves. While it is important that they stick with that practice plan themselves, you can help by knowing the plan and checking on progress.
<p>Support for upcoming speeches and performances...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run-Throughs. It is hard for speakers to practice fully without the pressure of an audience. You can help by having them run-through their remarks, testing their memory, flow, or transitions. Sometimes, helping speakers create notecards and then testing them on them can be useful, as is filming/recording their performance so they can watch. Even if you make zero comments, just running through a speech is helpful support. • Light Comments on Content and Delivery. While you may not be a trained coach, you can still provide useful comments. After a run-through, state your overall impression of the speech and what you took away from it. Say what was clear or unclear as well as what was distracting or powerful. Start with positive comments, then state areas for improvement, and end with one final positive takeaway. Even if you don't know what to do about it, these comments help speakers check how audiences perceive their work.
<p>Support for general skill development...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous Speaking Drills. In the car or in regular conversation, make a game out of a binary topic like, "Hot vs. Cold", and assigning them a side to defend (while you take the other side). Go back and forth, stating reasons to support either side. • Topic Discussions. Help increase awareness about key issues by posing a question that gets at a moral issue or a current event issue from an editorial. A good starting point is to say..."Would you rather...?" or "What if...?" or "How would you solve the situation where....?" Launch into an open-ended discussion about the controversial topic. • Storytelling Practice. Make a game out of giving someone one word or a theme to inspire a story. After 30 seconds to formulate thoughts, the person has to tell a true, personal story related to the theme, ending with a clear moral to the story.

