

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING GUIDE: RESOURCE 7

How to Feel Less Nervous Speaking in Public

Public speaking can be terrifying, especially if you don't do it often!

Take comfort in the fact that 15 million Americans suffer from social anxiety, which affects men and women and often begins by age 13. It helps to build your self-awareness of what situations make you the most nervous, so that you can hopefully anticipate these feelings in the future and do your best to prepare for them.

Common Issue	Coping Tips
Fear of Evaluation or Judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing your content – outlines and scripting• Knowing your stuff – research on content and on the audience, to know what they will care about• Anticipate where the audience might get stuck, frustrated, or doubtful and work that into your talk• In a presentation situation: Find the nodders!
Uncertainty (unfamiliar ideas, unfamiliar audience, unfamiliar situation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions about the situation (what is the purpose of the talk, how many people, what are people expecting, what is the seating situation like, what is the sound situation like, where am I standing, is there a podium)• Talk to the people around you and ask them questions, get used to them• Come up with a routine for yourself for what you do before a talk, so you feel some sense of control
Difference in Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-talk: remind yourself that people are just people• Remember that you don't have to know everything – you can ask questions to learn – but also, that you have specific expertise to offer
Negative personal thoughts or inability to be yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathing exercises• Calming activities: singing, listening to music, meditation, visualization exercises• Sleep, food, and water• Self-talk: think about what you are proud of and what are you excited to talk about• Get excited and pumped! Humor and laughter• Have a secret weapon – a lucky charm, a favorite outfit that makes you feel secretly powerful• Remind yourself to be okay with silences• Don't beat yourself up! Put things in perspective.
Avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always practice your remarks out loud beforehand• Face your fears. Start with something small and create practice experiences for yourself

