

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING GUIDE: RESOURCE 8

How to Cope with Public Speaking Anxiety

Coping with public speaking anxiety is part emotional and part preparation.

Of course, feeling completely “ready” to speak can go a long way to feeling less anxious. Knowing what you are going to say and feeling confident about the flow of ideas helps you stay focused on the point of your message and less on what might go wrong.

At the same time, you cannot ignore the emotions you feel, even when they are negative and filled with self-doubt. Resetting expectations and embracing the possibility that the experience might not go perfectly is an essential piece of coping with anxiety. Remind yourself that the goal is not to say everything exactly right;

instead, the goal should be to express yourself authentically and connect to your audience. Ask yourself: “Was I able to be myself?” “Did I clearly communicate something important?” “Did I connect to the audience?” If your answer is yes to all of these questions, try to let go of anything that did not go exactly to plan.

Tip 1

Create self-affirmation statements.

Internalize go-to statements that remind you that your message is important and your audience cares about what you have to say.

Tip 3

Warm-up out loud.

Even if you are running out of time or feel uncomfortable talking to yourself, warm-ups can help avoid stuttering, rambling, mistakes, or poor vocal technique.

Tip 2

Prepare a strong outline.

Feeling more prepared with your content helps and ensures that you connect to what your audience needs to hear.

Tip 4

Practice internalizing your message.

Figure out opportunities to talk about your message or ideas as many different times and ways as possible, so you don't have to think so hard about what to say.