

# PRESENTATION GUIDE: RESOURCE 11

## Vocal Technique for Presenters

### **As a presenter, your voice is one of your most powerful tools.**

As a presenter, your voice is one of your most powerful tools. To utilize the power of your voice, you need to make sure your voice stays healthy and well-supported. It is also important to be self-aware of your own natural vocal style and explore how you can develop even more range in your vocal color and tone. Volume also comes from breath support and healthy vocal production; that said, being a good speaker doesn't necessarily mean you need to be loud.

### **Vocal Health**

- Drink water and keep your vocal cords lubricated (avoid “sticky” drinks like milk or soda, which can make it hard to enunciate).
- Breathe deeply and make sure your shoulders and chest don't lift up when you breathe – it should be coming from your diaphragm. Use your stomach muscles as you speak.
- Make sure your voice doesn't dip too low into the vocal “fry” (that uhhhh sound at the very bottom of your range). Keep your overall pitch a little higher than you think.
- Warm up before you speak, especially if it is a long talk or early/late in the day.

### **Volume and Support**

- Remember: Breath drives the ability to speak loudly. Breathe deeply – as you speak, make sure you take pauses so that you actually have time to breathe.
- Using crisp and precise diction and consonants can imitate volume.
- Lift up the roof of your mouth and yawn to create more space in your mouth and allow for more vocal resonance (look up “exercises to raise soft palate”).
- Release your jaw and make sure you are opening your mouth enough. Place a thumb on your chin to release your jaw and massage the hinges by your ears. Massage your cheeks and make sure they are loose.

### **Vocal Colors**

Developed by voiceover artist Thom Pinto, the “Colors” approach was designed to help explore the full spectrum of the human voice. This approach was intended to help voiceover artists to portray different characters using only their voice and to add a range of depth and feeling to their performances. In the context of public speaking, this method can be applied to help you become more self-aware of your most natural communication style and make more intentional choices about your vocal tone. Colors can be used with a light or heavy degree of treatment, and your choice of color should be driven by the content and context.

**NOTE: Vocal colors are different than emotion – while they may overlap, these colors refer to how the voice sounds (not always how the person feels).**

## High-Energy Colors

### Red

- Robust enthusiasm, outgoing, excited, passionate
- Quick gestures directed forward; lower and louder voice; fast-paced, big smile, heavy delivery; vocal pitch varies; direct eye contact

### Gray

- Assertive, no-nonsense, tough, forceful, stark, business-like
- Stern facial expression; choppy, pointed hand gestures; clipped and choppy vocal rhythm; very straight posture; very direct eye contact; loud volume; lower vocal pitch without much variation

### Yellow

- Joyful, giggly, childlike, hyper, energetic, young
- Bouncy physicality; hand gestures directed upward; high-pitched voice; fast-paced delivery; not always direct eye contact

## Relaxed Colors

### Orange

- Motherly, warm, loving, kind, encouraging
- Smiling; warmth in the eyes; circling hands; slightly higher and lighter voice; smooth and comforting delivery style

### Blue

- Grounded, cool, intellectual, centered, calm, understated, subtle
- Hands at side or cupped in front; straight posture; serious facial expression; lower voice with even pitch

### Green

- Off-the-cuff, spontaneous, casual, fresh, breezy, conversational, noncommittal
- Leaning on one side; shrugging; free-form hands with wavy gestures; not always direct eye contact; thoughtful or upbeat facial expressions; vocal pitch varies

### Brown

- Earthy, textured, salt-of-the-earth, gritty, tough with a smile
- Hands on hips or leaning on something; slight side smile; circling hand gestures; slow overall speed; gruff, throaty texture to voice; lower pitch, towards the bottom of vocal range; lilting, smooth vocal delivery

## Character Colors (more for acting than everyday life):

### Violet

- Seductive, flirty, sensual, playful
- Swaying hips; slight smile; playing up and down the notes of your voice; smooth, round vocal tone; musical voice; flowing gestures

### Black

- Monotone, ominous, emotionless
- No facial expression; slow overall delivery, taking time on certain key words; lowest part of the vocal range with no change in pitch; straight posture

### Pink

- Airy, dreamlike, breathy, disconnected, spacey
- Little to no facial expression; slow overall delivery; highest part of the vocal range with no change in pitch; floaty hand gestures; very breathy pitch with a "spray can effect" to the overall vocal quality

