



Tips on Giving a Great **VIRTUAL** Presentation SPA Education Committee

- 1. Get to know your audience:** One of the fastest ways to lose an audience is to talk above or below their level of knowledge or outside their job descriptions. This commonly happens when people repeat talks in different settings. Tailor the content of your presentation to each audience group.
- 2. Identify key take home messages:** Your mission is not to discuss everything known to wo(man) about the subject or to show how smart you are. Identify three key points you want them to remember at the end of your presentation. Focus on these points and reinforce them. They should be aligned with your learning objectives. When in doubt, leave out the non-essential stuff!
- 3. Avoid busy slides and keep it simple:** Limit to one key message per slide. Limit the amount of text and bullet points as much as possible. Use high quality graphics, instead and avoid cheesy clip art images. Consider stating the key message as a heading for the slide with a supportive image. Break down complicated points into simple bites, that are easier to understand. If the audience is reading your slides, they are not listening to you. Never apologize for a busy slide, busy table or poor image. Never say "I know you can't see this, but..." Modify it or just don't use it. Use subtle transitions between slides. Avoid animated transitions like texts that swivel, explode or do the cartwheel.
- 4. Choose Sans-Serif fonts:** Serif refers to the decorative flushes or finishing strokes that are added to the ends of letters and symbols. Serif fonts like **Times New Roman** and **Cambria** are best used in documents with lots of text. Sans Serif fonts (without the tail) like **Arial**, **Calibri**, **Verdana** etc. display better with lower resolution projectors and are easier to read from a distance. Avoid stylish and hard to read fonts. *Italics can be hard to read*, and ALL CAPITAL LETTERS TAKE LONGER TO READ. Choose a big font size, at least 28 or larger.
- 5. Maximum contrast is good:** Either use light text on a dark background or dark text on a light background. The key is sharp contrast between text and background. Cool colors make better backgrounds than hot colors (red, yellow, orange). For colorblind people, red is as dull as blue or dark green. Thus, avoid using red text on black or blue backgrounds.
- 6. Rehearse several times:** Practice in front of a mirror, spouse or colleague. Practicing in front of someone who is not well versed in the topic can give you invaluable feedback, as can

those who are experts on the topic. Time your presentation and remove unnecessary slides. Don't try to squeeze a 45-minute lecture into 30 minutes. Nothing annoys the audience more than going over your allotted time!

7. **Dive right in:** Focus on your opening and start strong with an attention grabber. Tell a story, show a picture or mention a compelling statistic. The audience's attention is highest at the beginning and this is your opportunity to grab their attention. You should have a disclosure slide and can thank the planning committee, but there is no reason to include a slide with learning objectives.
8. **You are the presentation:** Do not read from your slides. They are merely there to support you, not the other way around. Say the words and show the pictures. This requires a lot of practice.
9. **Plan your closing:** People can't read slides with long lists of references at the end. Insert references in individual slides, if necessary. Summarize key take home messages, leave time for questions and finish within your allotted time.
10. **Record your lecture:** When your slides are complete and you have practiced your presentation – hit “record” to start recording your video as you run through your presentation.
11. **Convert your presentation to a video (MP4) file.** If you need assistance with this step, please let us know.

Good luck! Contact Kim Battle at kim@societyhq.com or 804-565-6323 with any questions or concerns.

Additional Reading:

1. Goodman A. *Why bad presentations happen to good causes*. Andy Goodman. Free PDF book on <https://www.thegoodmancenter.com/resources/>
2. Atkinson C (2018). *Beyond bullet points. Using PowerPoint to tell a persuasive story that gets results*. 4th edition. Microsoft press.
3. Gallo C. *Talk like TED. The 9 public-speaking secrets of the world's top minds*. 1st edition. St. Martin's Griffin. New York, NY.