

INTRODUCTION

So you have to give a presentation

The thought of presenting a lecture, speech, or workshop can be intimidating to some and exhilarating to others. Presenters' perceptions of their own capabilities and knowledge base ultimately contribute to their comfort level. The many components involved in preparing for a presentation have a significant influence on the outcome. Perhaps most significantly, presenters must be comfortable with a style that suits both them and their audience.

The five core concepts of a strong presentation are represented in the age-old refrain to a favorite nursery rhyme: "E-I-E-I-O."

1. **E**ngage participants from the moment they enter the training venue to the time they depart.
2. **I**nteract with participants to avoid a one-way transfer of knowledge and to assess the level at which they are grasping the concepts that are being presented.
3. **E**ducate participants with current and cutting-edge information and resources.
4. **I**nvolve students in the learning process through experiential activities and exercises.
5. **O**rganize the presentation so that the flow of information and the tone of the presentation are consistent.

THE ROLE OF THE PRESENTER/TRAINER

It is the responsibility of the presenter/trainer to lead the training session and to facilitate participants' interactions that will lend positively to their overall learning experience. While organization and control are necessary components of presentation, they must be tempered with a flexibility that respects students' expectations and needs and reflects an understanding of the importance of a comfortable, friendly learning environment.

A strong presenter ensures that key training topics are addressed while, at the same time, being willing to tackle issues that arise from interactions with participants.

TEACHING VERSUS TRAINING

Presentations offered in the field of victim services usually encompass styles and outcomes most associated with training. In some cases, such as the National Victim Assistance

Academy, university-style teaching via lectures is combined with training styles and techniques.

Training focuses on the learners, with an emphasis on their needs. In training venues, the presenter fills the role of facilitator, providing guidance through an interactive learning design to help students incorporate information into their personal frame of reference and discover ways to apply it in practical ways to their work and lives.

The primary differences between teaching and training are best summarized by renowned adult learning theorist M. S. Knowles (1980) in the following table.

PRIMARY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEACHING AND TRAINING

	TEACHING	TRAINING
Underlying Philosophy	<p>Knowledge is passed from the teacher to the learner.</p> <p>Organizations are improved through technical advances.</p> <p>Teacher-oriented</p>	<p>Knowledge is discovered through mutual investigation of problems and issues.</p> <p>Organizations are improved through developing the resources and self-directing capabilities of learners.</p> <p>Learner-oriented</p>
Assessment of Needs for and Results of Education	Looks only at observable, measurable behavior.	Looks at attitude as well as behavior.
Learning Objectives	<p>Usually insist on measurable and precise behavioral objectives.</p> <p>Emphasize acquiring information.</p>	<p>Tailor degree of precision in objectives to the task or skill being learned.</p> <p>Emphasize interpersonal and self-directing competencies.</p>
Content	Often used for technical knowledge and skills; psychomotor skills; languages; mathematics; and science.	Appropriate for interpersonal and technical skills requiring some degree of analysis and judgment; managerial skills; the arts and humanities.
Learning Methods	<p>Tend to be subject-oriented in structuring the content and mechanical in devising instructional methods.</p> <p>Use programmed learning, lecture, and audio/visual.</p>	<p>Tend to orient the structure of the content to the learner, the problem, and the situation.</p> <p>Use discovery learning methods.</p>

TRAINING PREPARATION

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Regardless of whether a presentation is a 30-minute speech or a two-day training session, it is critical that the presenter be prepared for the experience. Lack of preparation is always obvious, and reflects poorly on both the presenter and sponsors of the program. Thoughtful,

coordinated preparation almost always results in a presentation that is informative and engaging.

There are five critical considerations for advance preparation:

Audience. It is essential to know who the primary audience is. In the discipline of victim services, audience members can include the following:

- C Crime victims.
- C Community- and system-based victim service providers.
- C Criminal and juvenile justice professionals.
- C Allied professionals (such as mental health, faith community, educators, academia, etc.)
- C Public policy makers and elected officials.
- C Members of the community.
- C Volunteers.

Often, an audience is comprised of a combination of the above groups, each of which may have its own goals and expectations for the presentation. In identifying the types of audience members, presenters can formulate both their content and style to increase participants' comfort and to maximize the potential for participant training.

While it is helpful to know participants' affiliations, it is equally essential to have a basic understanding of their familiarity with the presentation topic, level(s) of knowledge, and possible expectations:

- C Are they seeking a high level, introductory overview of the topic, or more specific, practical “hands-on” knowledge?
- C How will participants utilize the knowledge they gain from the presentation?
- C Will the knowledge that is gained through the presentation be utilized on an individual or agency basis, or is collaboration an ultimate goal?
- C Will the presentation seek to offer new perspectives, or change existing ones? Both?
- C Is there a “learning curve” among participants and, if so, how can it be effectively utilized by the presenter?
- C What are participants' rationale for attending the training program? Are they:
 - Vacationers (consider this a “day off” from the grind of work)?
 - Hostages (were told to attend and do not want to be here)?
 - Happy campers (participants who are pleased to attend and eager to participate)?

(*Note:* Presenters can orally ask about participants' rationale, using these categories in a humorous manner that provides important insights into participants' motivation—or lack thereof.)

Politics among participants. Two victim advocates often reflect upon a shared training experience in which they thought they had “advance preparation” down to a science. After arriving and setting up the room for a two-day training session, participants began to arrive and move their name plates around. One casually explained that “It’s not a good idea for certain people in this session to sit next to each other; we could have some problems.”

Advance preparation requires that a presenter have advance knowledge and understanding of any “political land mines” among participants and sponsors. These might include:

- C Differing perspectives among individuals and agencies attending the presentation.
- C Personality conflicts between/among individuals.
- C Recent or pending legislation relevant to the presentation topic that might invoke heated discussions.
- C “Turf issues” that create barriers to collaboration.
- C Participants who have the reputation for dominating training sessions with opinions and hyperbole.
- C Any other types of issues that can create conflict among audience members.

An understanding of politics among participants can result in several distinct approaches for the presenter, who can:

- C Avoid any “red flag” topics in the presentation.
- C Covertly address the issues at the root of personal and professional politics (to give audience members an opportunity to reflect upon things that are causing divisiveness among them).
- C Use humor to address the basic nature of human conflict, i.e., “Aren’t we lucky that we work in a discipline where everybody gets along all the time, and we all see eye to eye?”
- C Incorporate conflict resolution topics and techniques into his or her presentation, and encourage participants to *confront and manage conflict*, rather than to avoid or negate it.

Current events. Prior to conducting a training program, presenters should make a diligent effort to be knowledgeable about current events. These might include:

- C Recently enacted laws that have an impact on participants and their jobs.
- C High profile cases that may create underlying tensions among participants.
- C Innovative new program approaches that the training programs’ sponsors or participants are funding or supporting.

Such activities can be identified through advance conversations with the training program’s sponsors, or by reviewing the past week’s (or month’s) newspapers (which are readily available on news media’s Web sites).

Physical environment. Often, presenters have little or no control over the physical environment of the training venue:

- C The most difficult room set-up in which to effectively train is the traditional “theater style” seating without tables, in which participants all face the presenter, but also face the back of their colleagues’ heads.
- C Traditional theater seating can be improved by moving rows of chairs into an inverted “V” so that participants’ seats are angled toward the front, with a center aisle dividing the apex of the “V.”
- C The ideal presentation room set-up to enhance group interactions and activities is groupings of square, rectangular, or round tables—angled toward the front of the room—that seat four to eight participants.

It is helpful for presenters to have a table set up at the front of the room to accommodate presentation materials, such as overhead transparencies and participant handouts. A resource table in the back of the room near the door is also a good idea so that presenters *and* participants can leave materials for students to take, as they choose.

Rooms should always be set up with an entrance/exit door in the back of the room, so that participants can come and go without disrupting the presentation. The participant registration table can be placed outside the training room near the entrance/exit door.

Presentation agenda and topics. There is no such thing as “too much information” in preparing to give a presentation.

In planning a presentation, there must be strong collaboration between the presenter and the sponsor(s) of the program. It is crucial to match the needs and goals of the audience with the skills and knowledge of the presenter. Without advance collaboration, a “disconnect” between the presenter’s goals and the sponsors’ goals is likely to occur.

The following questions are helpful in ascertaining the sponsor’s goals for the presentation, as well as expected outcomes:

- C Have the participants received any adequate training on this topic?
- C Will there be a “learning curve” among participants, i.e., some more knowledgeable than others? If there is, can the experience and expertise of some participants be utilized in a positive manner to educate other participants?
- C How will the information gained from the presentation be used by the participants? (Expectations of students and sponsors are sometimes quite different.)
- C What are the practical applications and outcomes that the sponsor would like to result from the knowledge gained?
- C Are there specific skills that the sponsor would like his/her participants to gain from attending this session?

- C What are the most critical topics that the sponsor would like the presenter to address? What about topics that are important, but less critical to the sponsor’s expected outcomes?
- C Are there any existing barriers that might detrimentally affect the learning environment (e.g., participant conflicts, participants being “forced” to attend the session, poor physical environment)?
- C What types of presentation techniques would be most beneficial to the participants?
 - Lecture?
 - Individual exercises?
 - Small group exercises?
 - Use of audio/visual aids?
 - A combination of the above?

ON-SITE PREPARATION

When participants first arrive at a presentation venue, they should be immediately engaged by the presenter and by the physical environment. They should be visually enthralled by the learning environment. They should be able to look around and say to themselves, “This looks like it is going to be an engaging and interactive presentation.”

Some creative ideas for on-site preparation include:

Use of visuals. There are many different types of visuals that can enhance a presentation venue:

- C Tear sheet pads that include colorful messages such as “Good Morning!” and “Welcome to the _____ Program.”
- C Tear sheet paper posted on walls that include:
 - “*Expectations.*” To record participant expectations of the presentation prior to beginning the session. Presenters should clarify exactly which “expectations” can be met through the session, and offer referrals for further information about topics that cannot be addressed within the time frame. “Expectations” should be maintained in full view throughout the session to help ensure that they are met.
 - *Resource sheets.* Presenters should offer students additional materials that can be obtained through clearinghouses, Web sites, and other resources. Two to four tear sheets posted on the wall entitled “Additional Resources” or “Extra Stuff” can be filled as the presentation progresses.
 - “*Parking Lot.*” A tear sheet with a picture of a car, for example, provides a space for participants to post questions or ideas that arise throughout the session, without interrupting the flow of the session. Presenters can also use the “parking lot” to post questions and topics students raise that can be addressed at a later time. Parking lot topics can either be written in felt pen on the tear sheet, or placed there using Post-it notes that are provided to participants. It is important for presenters to ensure that parking lot topics are addressed, either personally to the participant who identified it, or to the group as a whole.

- C Posters. Myriad posters that depict victims' rights and issues are readily available and can be placed on walls around the room (for black-and-white posters, it is a good idea to create a backing of colored construction paper). The resource guides published by the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization (VALOR) and National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) for National Crime Victims' Rights Week each year are excellent resources for victim-related posters. Such visuals serve to make an immediate connection with the audience and topic.
- C Overhead transparencies. A "welcome" slide with the title of the presentation, humorous and relevant cartoon, inspirational saying, or other artwork can be displayed on the projector screen when participants arrive, as well as during breaks.

Refreshments. Water, coffee, tea, sodas, and morning/afternoon snacks are important to participants as well as presenters. Small candies placed on tables are usually met with gratitude from weary students.

"Prize box." A box or bag decorated with felt markers to indicate "FABULOUS PRIZES" catches participants' eyes, and gets them thinking about if/how they could get whatever is in the box. Inexpensive prizes can be found at the local dollar store; candy bars make good prizes, as well as items from victim service and justice organizations or conference resource arenas (such as buttons, bookmarks, t-shirts, notepads, etc.)

Interpersonal interactions. Participants should also be greeted upon arrival by the presenter(s). This requires plenty of advance preparation (including planning to arrive at least 30 minutes before the designated starting time) so that when participants arrive, the presenter is prepared to personally meet them.

Some presenters find it difficult to personally meet and greet students prior to the presentation. While this process takes practice to perfect, it is helpful to create an immediate "bond" between the presenter and participants.

Some examples of personal greetings include:

- C "Good morning, I'm _____ and I'll be spending the next two days with you. What agency/organization are you from? Could you tell me a little about your work?"
- C "Hi, my name is _____ and I'll be your presenter today. I'm really happy to be here, and I'm glad you can join us for what should be a great learning experience."
- C "My name's _____ and I'll be spending the next two hours with you. That's a great tie—where did you get it?"
- C "I'm so glad you all invited me to join you here today. I'm _____. And you are [*read the participant's name tag*]. Can you tell me a little about yourself and the work you do?"

Use of music. An audio tape/CD player with tapes or CDs is a great tool for livening up the training environment. Music can be played that reflects the theme(s) of the program (for example, “We Can Work It Out” for a session on collaboration; “Respect” for a session on burnout and stress). For longer sessions, students can be asked to bring their favorite tape or CD to share their music with others.

ANATOMY OF A PRESENTATION

The “anatomy of a presentation” describes its scope and the activities that enhance the learning process. While there are a variety of components applicable to different presentations, for the purposes of presentations related to victims’ rights and services, twelve key elements are essential:

1. *Introduction of the presenter.* Presenters should have three types of vita that summarize their accomplishments:
 - C A three-to-four sentence overview of professional accomplishments, written in a manner that is conducive to introductions (i.e., how the presenter *wants* to be introduced).
 - C A one-page summary of accomplishments that are specific to the training topic (e.g., general victim assistance, restorative justice emphasis, mental health emphasis, etc.).
 - C The traditional, complete vitae that highlights the presenter’s professional history.

The first format should be utilized for introductions; the second for conference or training program announcements; and the third to provide an historical summary of the presenter’s overall accomplishments.
2. *Introduction of participants.* Participant introduction exercises will vary, depending upon the size of the group. Various approaches include:
 - C Asking participants to “stand and rise” based upon their professional affiliation, i.e., victim services, law enforcement, prosecution, courts, corrections, community members (making sure to add “any group I am missing?” to the icebreaker). This allows participants to identify with a smaller group of professionals who share their affiliation, as well as become aware of the diversity and richness of professional experience present at the training.
 - C For larger groups (over 50) and where time allows, dividing the group into teams of ten, and asking them to “process”: participants’ first names, professional affiliation, and years of victim services’ experience (which are added up for the report-out). Then, asking each team to identify “three things they bring to the training program” and “three things they hope to take away from the training program.” Each team selects a spokesperson to do a “rapid report out” to the larger group. This allows all participants to be introduced, in effect, to the larger group, as well as the opportunity for members of the smaller groups to get to know some basic information about each other.
3. *Overview of the topic or lesson plan.* The presenter can offer a brief summary of his/her learning goals and objectives, and indicate “This is where I plan to go today. Would

- everyone like to go there with me?” This encourages a “statement of learning objectives” from both the presenter *and* participants.
4. *Expectations.* This brief exercise can be combined with participant introductions (time permitting), and provides students with an opportunity to describe what they hope to get out of the presentation. The “expectations” process also allows the presenter to clarify which expectations can be met through the presentation, placing others in the “parking lot” for further reference to additional resources.
 5. *Icebreakers.* These individual or group exercises are intended to immediately engage participants. Icebreakers use new insights, humor, or quick, interactive activities to introduce the topics in an interpersonal manner. Examples of icebreakers include:
 - C In a session on victims’ rights, participants can be asked to move around the room next to signs that describe the five core victims’ rights (notification, participation, protection, restitution, and input) to “the right that they think is most difficult to implement in their jurisdiction.” Each of the five groups is then asked to define two-to-three reasons why that right is most difficult to implement, with group responses processed back to the plenary group.
 - C In the beginning of a session on burnout and stress, participants can be provided with a work sheet with two columns: (1) The Three Greatest Stressors in My Personal and Professional Life and (2) Three Positive Ways I Cope With Stress. The “stressors” can be processed out to develop a comprehensive list of stressors common to victim service providers, with the responses about coping utilized later in the session to address stress management.
 - C Utilizing “benefits” and “barriers” worksheets (see Appendix B.3), the presenter can ask participants—as individuals—to identify the benefits of and barriers to (whatever the topic is). They can process their input in small groups, with brief “round robin” reports to the full group.
 6. *The “hook.”* It is important to “grab participants’ attention” from the very beginning of a presentation, and draw them into the learning process. Examples of hooks include surprising new statistics; descriptions of promising practices that positively change the way business is conducted; or a provocative question that opens up discussion and debate among participants, such as “In your opinion, what is the most significant accomplishment of America’s victims’ rights discipline?”
 7. *Main ideas or concepts.* These are directly related to the session’s lesson plan and/or goals and objectives. Main ideas or concepts should be considered in the context of this question: “What are the key points that I want participants to leave the session with?” They can be presented through a variety of approaches, including the following:
 - C *Facts.* Verifiable or proven assertions or observations about reality.
 - C *Definitions.* Explanations of terms.
 - C *Testimonials.* Opinions or views from a respected authority.
 - C *Statistics.* Research-based overviews of an idea.
 - C *Narratives.* Stories that demonstrate the impact of an idea.

C *Case studies.* Actual events to point out the reality of an idea.

C *Comparisons.* Distinctions of ideas in relation to other.

C *Promising practices.* Descriptions of approaches to the delivery of victim services that appear to be, or have been evaluated to be, successful.

8. *Participant activities.* These include individual, small group, and full group exercises designed to promote subjective thinking and interactive discussions relevant to the main topics. Participant activities can be planned in advance of the presentation (with prepared worksheets and exercise guidelines provided to participants), or created on-the-spot to emphasize a critical issue or point. Clear guidelines on activities and time lines should be provided, either orally or in writing. Examples of participant activities are included in Appendix B, *Presentation/Facilitation Exercises and Aids*.

9. *Action planning.* This process, which involves using the information gained from the presentation to plan for positive change in the future, can be brief or extensive, depending upon time constraints and program goals and objectives. At the least, action planning should encourage participants to consider the following:

C What are three things *I can personally do differently* as a result of this presentation?

C What are three things *my agency can do differently* as a result of what I learned from this presentation.

Several action planning formats are included in Appendix A, *Participant Worksheets*.

10. *Closing.* The process of closing all presentations should also be considered a “genesis”—the beginning of the practical applications of what has been experienced, shared, and learned through the presentation. For example, presenters can offer a challenge to participants, or summarize the presentation with a favorite anecdote or quotation. An essential component of the closing is to thank participants for attending and sharing their insights, and validating that their input contributes to improved presentations in the future for the trainer. (Refer to Chapter 8 for additional information about closing.)

11. *Evaluation.* Participants should be given time to assess the quality of the presentation and presenter, and to offer their suggestions as to how the presentation can be improved. Evaluations offer presenters helpful guidance to improve their presentation style and content in the future. (Refer to Chapter 8 for additional information about evaluation.)

12. *Follow-on.* If presenters offer additional resources to participants, it is essential to honor commitments in a timely manner. The use of both e-mail and prepared resource/information packages on frequently-presented topics helps facilitate effective follow-on, and reinforces the learning experience beyond the on-site environment of the presentation.

The anatomy of the human body can also be used as a basis for understanding the anatomy of a presentation. Consider the following:

C *Head.* Presenters should be prepared with facts based upon research and practice that hold practical applications for their students.

- C *Neck*. “Sticking your neck out” means going the extra mile to engage all students, encouraging and validating their participation, and being flexible enough to meet their specific needs while still covering the major topics included in the lesson plan.
- C *Heart*. When presenting victim-related topics, presenters have many opportunities to reach students’ hearts. Vignettes and stories based upon both the painful *and* the positive experiences of crime victims and service providers can build important emotional connections to the subjects at hand.
- C *Hands*. A “hands-on” approach to presentation engages and involves students through verbal interactions and individual and group activities, and provides plenty of opportunities for feedback about the topic(s) being presented.
- C *Stomach*. “It takes guts” to tackle many of the complicated and challenging issues related to crime and victimization. A good presenter must be prepared to tackle highly emotional issues as well as students’ reactions to difficult topics.
- C *Legs*. Presenters should offer information and resources that “have legs,” i.e., that can be taken from the training venue and applied in practical ways to participants’ lives and jobs. Students should also be referred to additional resources where they can continue to enhance their knowledge and capabilities.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND STYLES

There is an endless array of communication styles among presenters, who must find a style that suits their knowledge, personality, and professional experience. There are five “theories” related to the development of strong communication skills:

1. *Nobody is born a great communicator*. Communication skills reflect a culmination of one’s life experiences as well as personal and professional interactions with others.
2. *Communication style is unique*. Good presenters pick up ideas and tips from other presenters whose styles they admire, but personalize them to their own frame of reference.
3. *Communication equates to connection* with the topic(s), the audience, and the professions that are affected by the presentation. It is the presenter’s most essential tool to develop a bond of mutual trust and respect.
4. *The development of good communication skills takes time*. It is a journey, not a destination. The road to good communication skills challenges presenters with both fast thoroughfares and roadblocks that contribute to a style that is uniquely theirs.
5. *All presenters have strengths and weaknesses*. The goal of all presenters should be to build upon their strengths and eliminate or mitigate their weaknesses through commitment and practice. Practice, indeed, makes perfect!

COMMUNICATION STRENGTHS

Respect for the audience. While a presenter is usually expected to bring a new and different level of expertise to the audience, it is critical to publicly recognize the audience’s knowledge and commitment to the topic so as to honor the richness and diversity of its experience. Advance preparation can contribute to this goal: If a presenter knows accomplishments and activities of participants or their communities, this should be validated early on in the process. Validation that “victim assistance is difficult work that takes a special kind of person” is also important. Reflections on the many historical accomplishments of the victims’ rights discipline relevant to the training topic(s) are helpful—particularly those related to the jurisdiction in which the training program is being held. And acknowledgment of the contributions of *diversity* to the disciplines of justice and victim assistance (diversity by gender, culture, geography, age, and political persuasions, among others) serves to validate the importance of differing perspectives and views.

Orientation to the physical space. Presenters should make time to “bond” with their physical environment. It is helpful to determine what volume of voice is needed to reach the back of the room; whether there is a table for slides and audio-visual aids; whether the presenter can easily move around among participants; and whether the walls are thick or thin to help avoid interruptions from outside the room.

Humility. When a presenter is introduced (often as an “expert” in the presentation topic), it is a good idea to offer background information about how one’s success came to be. Examples include:

- C “My years of service to crime victims would be meaningless without the inspiration and guidance I have received from those whom I seek to help. Their strength as survivors gives me strength to hopefully represent their interests and needs to you here today.”
- C “I have never in my life given a presentation without getting so much in return. You are here to learn from me, yet the lessons I will gain from you will help me so much in the future.”
- C “Isn’t it funny how you are never considered an ‘expert’ until you travel outside of your own community? Each of you here today possesses expertise that can help us all learn together, and I hope you are willing to share your knowledge with me, and with the other participants.”

Comfort with the topic. The adage “practice makes perfect” directly applies to communication skills and styles. A good presenter reaches a “comfort zone” only when he or she truly knows the topic, and is able to convey it without being glued to notes or slides. “Practice” can be derived from consistent presentations of a topic, or plenty of practice in advance of presenting a new topic.

Rhythm. One can consider the rhythm of the ocean as a good guide for “presentation rhythm.” The calm and quiet sea can, with enough current, turn into gentle undulations that build into strong and powerful waves. In presentations, there is a time for quiet, a time for building up energy, and a time for unleashing a wave of spirit and enthusiasm. Presentation rhythm must adapt itself to a presenter’s individual style, and to the tenor of the audience.

Engaging the audience. A presenter can be either a distant icon or an active participant in the learning process. Strong communication skills require extensive interaction with the audience—asking questions, validating responses, physically moving around the participants, and engaging participants in interactive exercises that tap their knowledge and experience.

“Eyes wide open.” Keeping an eye on participants and their reactions, levels of engagement, and lack of either is a critical tool for presenters. The “body language” of participants can be very telling as to how they are reacting to the material, and it’s important to be aware of—and respond to—any nuances or reactions that may ultimately affect the quality of the training program.

“Mixing it up.” A combination of presentation techniques and styles contributes to successful training programs. There is a time to be serious and a time to be humorous; a time to lecture with a research foundation, and a time to diverge from lecture and use experiential tools such as victims’ experience; and a time to stick to a lesson plan, and a time to diverge in order to meet participants’ needs.

Connecting to the cutting edge. Information that is new and thought provoking always engages an audience. The “Staying on the Cutting Edge” section of this chapter offers a variety of resources that help keep presenters abreast of the latest developments in victim assistance, criminal and juvenile justice, public safety, and allied professional concerns.

Being “prepared to punt.” The best laid plans can sometimes go awry. A fundamental skill of training is the capacity to be “fluid and flexible,” that is, to be prepared to diverge from original training plans and schedule if participants’ reactions indicate a need to do so. Participants’ needs are much more important than the needs of a trainer to maintain a rigid schedule.

COMMUNICATION WEAKNESSES

Inflexibility. If there is one weakness in lesson plans, it is their capacity to tie a presenter to a predetermined set of goals and values. Rigidity constricts the learning process. The learning experience should be fluid and flexible to accommodate participants’ expectations and needs.

“All about me.” Perhaps the greatest communication weakness is for a presenter to be too self-focused. The concepts of “me” and “my” should be banished from a presenter’s toolbox. The bottom line is: “It’s *not* about the presenter; it’s *all about the audience.*”

Knowledge without experience. While presentation of research-based information is vital to victim service professionals, it is critical to make the research “come alive” with real-life stories and experiences. If the presenter has none to offer, it is likely that participants do. Thus, it is important to engage participants in discussions to interpret research findings to the reality of crime victims and victim assistance professionals.

Lack of preparation. Presenters who are unprepared can fool neither themselves nor their audience. It is better to turn down presentation assignments that cannot be completed with knowledge, enthusiasm, and precision.

Lack of rest. When a presenter is tired, it sets a tiring pace for the entire session. A good night’s rest preceding the presentation, avoidance of alcohol or too many stimulants such as coffee and cigarettes, a light breakfast, and quiet time planned before the actual presentation all combat this potential pitfall.

“Podium clutching.” This concept describes presenters who grip the lectern and use it as a shield, while failing to grip the audience. “Podium clutchers” tend to lecture, be rigid, and avoid interaction with the audience. Continual practice as a presenter will remove the physical and emotional barriers that a podium represents, and allow the presenter to be and appear relaxed and comfortable with the topics.

Inappropriate emulation. Presenters often know a colleague whose presentation style they admire and wish to emulate. However, each presenter is unique, and his or her style must reflect a distinctive approach that is comfortable. Attempts to replicate somebody else’s style and approach to presentation take away from one’s personal strengths and characteristics. While imitation is, indeed, the sincerest form of flattery, it can also lead to a presentation style that is neither comfortable nor consistent for a trainer.

COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Typically, there are five core components associated with good communication:

Appearance. While presenters cannot easily change the way they look, they can ensure that they always look their best. It is important to determine the ambiance of the presentation venue; presenters should always dress in a manner that reflects the audience’s comfort level. For example, keynote speeches usually require business attire. More informal presentations—particularly those that encompass multiple days—allow for business casual attire, i.e., slacks and comfortable shoes. It is essential to coordinate attire with the sponsors of the presentation to fit the tenor of the event.

Personal hygiene is essential for all presentations. Clean and pressed clothes, neat hair, brushed teeth (and fresh breath!), and limited physical distractions (such as too much jewelry or change that jingles in one’s pockets) all contribute to a positive appearance.

Speaking. Six elements affect the style of a presenter’s speaking skills:

- C *Voice.* It should always be natural and clearly heard by every listener.
- C *Volume.* The loudness of one’s voice is affected by background noise and proximity to the audience. In order to increase volume, one must breathe correctly. It helps to inhale by expanding the diaphragm, located at the base of the rib cage. Breathing deeply and regulating the release of air from the lungs help modulate the volume of one’s voice. The more force one exerts, the louder the voice becomes. Presenters should also request microphones for larger training venues, and test them out prior to the training program.
- C *Articulation.* A presenter’s “sound production” can make or break a presentation. An unavoidable impediment (such as a lisp or stammer) should be downplayed if possible. Words should be enunciated clearly, especially those with more than two syllables.
- C *Pronunciation.* Correctly stressing syllables makes a presenter’s words clear and easier to understand. A standard dictionary is an excellent reference for ensuring correct pronunciation of difficult words.
- C *Rate.* Inexperienced speakers—or those who are nervous—tend to talk too fast. It’s helpful to pause between sentences. Presenters should not fear silence; listeners need time to digest ideas. However, if a presenter speaks too slowly, the participants may become bored.

An effective presentation technique is to vary the speed of the words. Stories or information that a presenter is familiar with often come across better when spoken a bit more quickly at a higher volume. Likewise, particularly moving anecdotes can be delivered in a slow and more quiet voice.

- C *Pitch.* The height and depth of sounds made in presentations are similar to musical notes. Presenters should try to vary their pitch to animate words and emphasize ideas. For example, the pitch of one’s voice can be raised at the end of a question. Monotone speaking voices (all words spoken at the same pitch) tend to bore audiences (Seymour 1987).

Listening. The listening skills that are so essential to the success and effectiveness of victim service professionals in working with victims should be incorporated into presentation skills. Just as a presenter hopes his or her audience listens and understands the key concepts being taught, it is very important to return the courtesy of respectful listening to one’s students.

Because of the often fast pace of presentations, it is helpful to seek confirmation about what participants have said. Summarizing and repeating participants’ comments or questions can ensure that the presenter has truly heard the key components of what they are saying or asking. In larger training venues, this approach also helps to ensure that other participants hear and understand the comment or question.

Validating. When participants are engaged and they speak up and offer opinions or ask questions, their effort should be rewarded with validation from the speaker. Validation expresses appreciation for the input, and confirms that the input is valuable and appreciated. Some common validation techniques for presenters include:

- C Responding by using the participant's first name (this is why nametags and name plates are so important).
- C Using affirming phrases such as: "I appreciate your point of view." "Thanks for bringing up that important point." "That's a really good interpretation of this concept." "You know, I've never thought of that before. Thanks for pointing it out."
- C "Bouncing off" a participant's input by posing it as a question for the full audience: "Juanita brings up a good point about the need for separate waiting rooms in courthouses. What do the rest of you think about her idea?"
- C Giving a "fabulous prize" for particularly innovative or humorous input from a participant.

Body language. Body language is an important element of presentation. A presenter's nonverbal communication portrays a great deal about him or her to the audience.

The following guidelines are helpful in linking body language to positive communication with the participants:

- C *Eye contact.* Presenters should always look around the room and include all participants in their periphery. If a presenter is nervous, it helps to look slightly above participants' heads. If there are "friendly faces" in the audience, they should be concentrated on for validation.
- C *Physical gestures.* Gestures can be used to emphasize important points. They keep listeners attentive by giving them a visual focal point. Only meaningful, appropriate gestures should be used; otherwise, they become distractions.
- C *Facial expressions.* Listeners usually focus on the presenter's face. Facial mannerisms help them understand the meaning behind the presenter's words. A "frozen face" loses the audience's attention. In addition, the presenter's honesty and enthusiasm are conveyed in his or her face.

In addition, there are nonverbal and verbal actions that can detrimentally affect one's presentation:

- C *Voice:* quiver, monotone, stammer, awkward pauses.
- C *Mouth:* swallowing, clearing the throat, "um"; sighing.
- C *Face:* twitching, "deadpan expression," rolling eyes, staring.
- C *Arms:* rigid, tense, waving, fidgeting.
- C *Body:* swaying, pacing, grabbing the podium, flailing the arms, tossing hair, scratching any body part.

(The preceding section is excerpted from A. Seymour, *Developing a Speakers' Bureau*, National Center for Victims of Crime.)

DEALING WITH “PROBLEM PARTICIPANTS”

In an ideal world, every participant would be excited to learn, glad to be involved in the learning experience, committed to being a “team player,” and eager to please the instructor. However, not *all* participants fit this description; some students view training as a nightmare from which they hope they will soon awake.

Sometimes problem behaviors can be identified early on in the presentation by ultimate presentation skills that:

- C Establish “ground rules” posted on a tear sheet: everyone should participate; nobody should over-participate; interrupting others is not acceptable behavior; and the instructor is given permission to address what is perceived as disruptive behavior.
- C Identifying the participants’ motivation (or lack thereof) for attending the training program (see “Training Preparation” in this chapter: “vacationers”; “hostages”; and “happy campers.”)
- C Recognize that problem behaviors affect the overall learning process for *all* participants; be willing to and capable of confronting them.

There are typically five types of participants that pose challenges to both the instructor and the learning process:

1. *Dominators*: Attempt to take control of the learning environment away from the instructor.
2. *Hostages*: Do not want to be at the training, and make sure that everyone knows this fact.
3. *Arguers*: Will argue with the presenter and other participants simply for the sake of argument.
4. *Distractors*: Have difficulty remaining focused on the learning process and, as a result, engage in behavior that distracts from the training program.
5. *Class clowns*: Take every opportunity to tell jokes and make others laugh, regardless of the serious nature of the topic.

The following charts examine the types of “problem behaviors” described above, as well as potential responses from an ultimate presenter:

THE DOMINATOR

POSSIBLE BEHAVIORS	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
<p>Raises his/her hand in response to every presenter question or probe.</p> <p>Interrupts other participants.</p> <p>Knows <i>everything</i> about <i>everything</i>, and wants to make sure everyone in the room knows it.</p>	<p>“I’ll get back to you once others have had a chance to respond.”</p> <p>“Let’s give everyone a chance to finish sharing his or her ideas.”</p> <p>At break: “You seem really engaged in this topic. Would you help me process out our next group exercise?” – and/or –</p> <p>“I want to make sure everyone has a chance to be involved, so you can help me by jotting down your thoughts on the index cards I provided and giving them to me, so I can make sure your issues—as well as <i>others’</i> issues—are addressed.</p>

THE HOSTAGE

POSSIBLE BEHAVIORS	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
<p>Identifies unwillingness to be present during the introduction/icebreaker.</p> <p>Sits with arms crossed, and fails to participate in any individual or group exercise.</p>	<p>“For those of you who were ‘ordered’ to attend this program, I hope by the end of this session you will feel glad to have attended.”</p> <p>At break: “Your regret at being here is really clear to me. Is there anything I can do to make this experience more enjoyable for <i>you</i>, and for the <i>other participants</i>” – and/or –</p> <p>“What topics can I address that might be useful to you in your work?” – and/or–</p> <p>Ignore the participant, and encourage others who bring up that person’s “hostage” behavior (at break) to do likewise.</p>

THE ARGUER

POSSIBLE BEHAVIORS	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
<p>Questions every fact and statistic presented.</p> <p>Argues with other participants’ about their input and/or responses.</p> <p>Mutters to self (or out loud) about how “stupid” or “ridiculous” the training program and/or instructor are.</p>	<p>Know your facts, and be prepared to back them up with citations and references.</p> <p>Clarify to the group that “there are clearly different opinions on this subject” and variety is what makes our field interesting.</p> <p>At break: “I’m sorry you think this training may be a waste of your time. Is there anything I can do to make it more worthwhile?” – and/or –</p> <p>“Some folks are telling me that your angst makes them uncomfortable. Any ideas on what we can do about that?” – and/or –</p> <p>“Your outbursts are making me, as well as your fellow participants, uncomfortable. Is there anything I can do to help you resolve your issues, or would you feel better just leaving?”</p>

THE DISTRACTOR

POSSIBLE BEHAVIORS	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
Continually talks to other participants while the instructor—or others—are talking.	“Oh, you look like you have an idea. Is there anything you’d like to share with the group?”
Files fingernails or picks at cuticles while yawning and stretching.	“Boy, can I relate to your yawns . . . I only got five hours sleep last night! Any ideas on how I can rev this training program to keep us both interested?”
Has rude or inappropriate responses to the instructor or other participants.	“That is not appropriate for us to discuss at this time. Why don’t you see me at break. ”

THE CLASS CLOWN

POSSIBLE BEHAVIORS	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
Makes a joke about everything.	At break: “You’re a riot! Can you help me facilitate the next game/learning exercise and infuse some fun into it?”
Is a “smart aleck” in every interaction with the instructor and/or other participants.	“There’s a time for humor in this program, but it’s coming a bit later. Can you hold your responses until then?” – and/or – At break: “This is a pretty serious topic, and there are some folks who are uncomfortable with humorous interjections. Can you help me start off the next session with a joke or two, and then get back to the topic?”

When dealing with “problem participants,” an instructor’s ability to “punt” will be utilized as never before. It’s important to remember that bad behaviors should be addressed—privately with emphasis, or publicly with a light touch of humor—so that control of the learning environment is *not* turned over to the problem participant, and that disruptions are limited or eliminated.

TRAINING AIDS

Audio/visual training aids can greatly enhance the presentation process. Essentially, there are eleven training aids that are relevant to presentations about victim- and justice-related issues:

1. *Presentation slides.* Numerous presentation software packages exist that can enhance a speaker’s audio/visual presentation. Presenters can utilize standardized templates or create their own; a wide variety of colors and background adds visual impact to the range of slides one can create. Presenters must be careful to avoid cramming too much information onto presentation slides. In addition, participant pages that correspond with the slides—and include space for participant notes—can easily be generated with most software packages.

2. *Tear sheet pads.* In using tear sheets, the following points should be remembered:
 - C Make sure there is enough paper before you begin.
 - C Before starting your session, make sure the tear sheet pad stand is stable and that enough working markers are available.
 - C Have several, thick colored markers (thinner markers are difficult to view from a distance).
 - C *Never* use red ink, except for underlining/emphasis! It is difficult to see at a distance.
 - C Alternate two colored pens on each tear sheet (i.e. green/blue, black/purple.)
 - C When switching topics, also switch the two colors of pens you are using.
 - C Use as few words as possible—always print.
 - C Make your letters two inches high.
 - C Leave two inches between lines.
 - C Utilize the top two-thirds of the pad.
 - C Underscore key points by using lines, stars, underlining, boxes, and color.
 - C Use a pencil to record additional information related to the key points on the tear sheet. You will be able to read them, but they will not be visible to the participants.
 - C Recruit a volunteer to help hang completed sheets on the wall so as to not interrupt the training process. Have pre-cut strips of tape ready to facilitate this.
 - C Tape pages on the wall to reinforce learning.
 - C Better yet, obtain tear sheet pads that have adhesive on them, which simplify the process of hanging individual sheets on the wall.
 - C If tear sheets are prepared and hung prior to the actual exercise or training activity, the information can be “hidden until needed” by taping the bottom of the tear sheet slightly above the top (i.e. flipping it up to conceal the information).
3. *Overhead transparencies.* For larger groups, tear sheets may not be visible to all participants. A good alternative is clean overhead transparency film that can be filled with information—similar to tear sheets—with transparency markers.
4. *Cartoons.* Comic pages in newspapers, editorial cartoons, and cartoons from magazines provide endless opportunities for humorous depictions of issues related to victim assistance, public safety, and related topics. Ensure that proper credit is listed for cartoons used and that humor is appropriate to the subject and audience. Cartoons should be blown up to fill an 8½ x 11 overhead transparency slide. They can be utilized as training aids and displayed on the overhead projector during breaks. It is always a good idea to bring paper copies of popular cartoons; many students request them for their own use.
5. *Quotations.* Inspirational quotations can be used judiciously to emphasize key points, as well as to link themes to some of the world’s great thinkers. Quotations books are readily available in book stores and on the Internet (by utilizing a search engine with the word “quotations”). Good quotations also abound as a result of presentations; make sure to keep records in a file folder of usable quotations. Good presenters maintain a “tickler”

- file with their notations of quotations. It is important to always ensure proper attribution for quotations.
6. *News articles.* News headlines, articles, and photos can provide dramatic visuals for presentations. It is a good idea to enlarge them before copying them onto overhead transparencies. As with quotations, proper attribution is essential.
 7. *Current research statistics and tables.* Many of the data generated by the U.S. Department of Justice—which are available in paper formats from the NCJRS, OVC, and other clearinghouses, as well as electronically via the Internet—provide sound research for presentations, as well as audio/visual aids. The quality of the graphic design in Justice Department publications is excellent, and simply needs to be enlarged for overhead transparencies.
 8. *Videotapes.* There are myriad videotapes that are applicable to presentations for victim services, criminal and juvenile justice, and allied professionals. OVC, for example, has produced excellent videotapes (available free from OVCRC) on “Mental Health Needs of Victims” and “News Media Coverage of Crime”. It is a good idea for presenters to maintain a video library, and to request copies of *videotapes they have viewed that can be helpful for presentation purposes*. The quality of videotapes is key; tapes recorded beyond “third generation” are usually grainy and difficult to view. Ensure the video monitor can read encoded videotapes for closed captioning.
 9. *Victim-related posters.* For the past 15 years, resource materials developed for victim-related commemorative weeks, as well as state and local victim awareness initiatives, have included wonderful posters that depict various themes related to victim sensitivity and victims’ rights. Posters can be utilized as visuals on the walls of presentation venues, as well as copied onto overhead transparencies. It is usually a good idea to use a color copier or copy on a lighter mode to ensure clarity.
 10. *“Victim Vignettes.”* The “power of the personal story” cannot be overestimated in helping people understand the significance of victims’ rights and services. Victims’ personal stories, both painful and positive, add tremendous value and emotion to any criminal justice or victim-related presentation. It is essential to secure permission to utilize victims’ personal stories for public venues, and protect victims’ confidentiality upon request (in cases where they would like their stories to be told without direct attribution).
 11. *Participant handouts.* Any individual handouts for participants can be “color coded” on the paper they are printed on to provide easy accessability. It is crucial that any training resources that are distributed to participants are provided either *before* the training program, or *during the breaks*. The “flurry of paper” that would otherwise occur can be very distracting to the learning process.

(See Appendix B.1, *Presentation “Tools of the Trade,”* for a comprehensive list of training aids.)

“STAYING ON THE CUTTING EDGE”

The tasks associated with effective presentations require that trainers “stay on the cutting edge.” Maintaining current files and resources about crime and victimization, victim

assistance and victims' rights, criminal and juvenile justice, and public safety is critical to offering audiences the most timely, accurate information available.

Some general guidelines for maintaining up-to-date information include:

- C Avoid using anything over five years old. Unless utilized for comparison purposes, i.e., to demonstrate the decrease in the violent crime rate from 1989 to 1999, it is probably obsolete.
- C Always attribute the source of material. Plagiarism is a crime. In both written and oral presentations, presenters must always cite sources for the information they are offering to their audiences.
- C It is helpful to have hanging file folders, into which new resources can be placed with ease. Presenters should review the topics that they are most frequently requested to address, and maintain file folders that mirror these issues. Additional files for quotations, cartoons, and other training aids should also be developed.
- C While national statistics and data are informative for most audiences, it is helpful to personalize them to the state or local level. National trends are not always replicated locally, and audiences tend to relate better to data that are significant to them, and to their jurisdictions.

RESOURCES FOR MAINTAINING THE CUTTING EDGE

Justice Department Clearinghouses. Within the Office of Justice Programs, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) offers information and resources on a variety of topics including crime, drugs, delinquency and victimization through six clearinghouses:

- C National Institute of Justice: (800) 851-3420
- C Office for Victims of Crime: (800) 627-6872
- C Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention: (800) 638-8736
- C Bureau of Justice Statistics: (800) 732-3277
- C Bureau of Justice Assistance: (800) 688-4252
- C Office of National Drug Control Policy: (800) 666-3332

The many resources available through the clearinghouses are beneficial to presenters who seek to keep current on key topics. In addition, registering with NCJRS provides an excellent resource for trainers who seek additional information about topics related to crime and victimization. Readers can sign up for material to be automatically sent based on various categories of interest.

World Wide Web. The power and scope of the Internet have many positive implications for presenters. Data and resources that a decade ago would have taken weeks or months to secure

are readily available in electronic formats 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Many victim-related Web sites are hyper-linked to other similar sites to facilitate rapid access to related information. Knowledge of how to use search engines simplifies research on the Web. In addition, Web surfers should always try to affirm the veracity of information derived from the Internet and provide proper attribution for resources that are utilized for presentations. A comprehensive list of victim- and justice-related Web sites appears in the *National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide*, published and updated by VALOR with support from OVC, and is included in Appendix G.2.

Electronic list-servs. This increasingly popular mode of electronically sharing current information about crime and victimization—as well as generating action on key public policy issues—offers timely (and often daily) updates on important topics. Most list-servs offer free membership, which can be accessed by providing one's name and e-mail address at Web sites that sponsor list-servs.

Toll-free telephone numbers. The roster of approximately 20 national toll-free information and referral numbers relevant to crime and victimization is updated annually each year in the *National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide*, and can be a useful tool in maintaining the cutting edge because they link victim service providers and justice professionals to vital resources available at both the national level and in communities across the country. (See Appendix G.1.)

Journals. A substantial body of research relevant to crime and victimization is published regularly in journals. While more of this information is becoming available in electronic format through the Internet, many journals are published for subscribers only. However, some journals are available free from libraries and can be requested through inter-library loans.

Books. Thousands of titles have been published in the area of crime and victimization. They are available at many book stores, on-line via the Internet, and at book sales sponsored at conferences.

Agency newsletters. There are nearly 200 national newsletters that address current cutting edge issues of crime and victimization, available in both paper and electronic formats. In addition, state and local victim assistance and criminal/juvenile justice newsletters often highlight current data and trends that are jurisdiction-specific.

The news media. Timely information about crime and victimization (research findings, government statistics, coverage of actual cases, etc.) can be found in both print and electronic media. Most news media also sponsor Web sites that facilitate easy electronic access.

Conferences. Excellent resources are available from seminars and workshops at conferences. A good technique is to visit workshop rooms during conference breaks to pick up resource

materials that were presented. In addition, many conferences sponsor resource tables or arenas where good information is available free to conference participants.

STANDARDIZING PARTICIPANT RESOURCES

A good presenter should seek to “plant seeds” in participants that can be cultivated to grow and flourish beyond the presentation venue. In the field of victim services, such resources focus on being able to obtain continuing education for personal and professional growth as well as being able to offer information and referrals to crime victims.

Presenters should collaborate with allied professionals to develop current and cutting edge resources that can be utilized for participant resources. When a great reference document is discovered, it should be shared with others. For example, an informal network of justice and victim assistance professionals regularly share current information and referral resources that are retained in a permanent resource file and utilized for participant handouts.

Standardized participant resources can include copies of slides of key presentations (three to a page with lines for participants to take notes) that are directly related to, or an adjunct to, the key topics addressed by the presenter.

In addition, there are excellent resources for providing information and referrals for crime victims, service providers, criminal and juvenile justice professionals, and allied professionals. Many are included in each year’s *National Crime Victims’ Rights Week Resource Guide*. These include:

- C The roster of toll-free information and referral numbers for victim information and referrals.
- C A list of Web sites relevant to victim assistance and criminal/juvenile justice, including federal and state agencies and nonprofit organizations.
- C U.S. Department of Justice National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) registration form (which includes registration for the Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center).
- C “Resources on Crime and Victimization” available free from the NCJRS (which includes ordering numbers).
- C National Victim Assistance and Criminal/Juvenile Justice Organizations (which includes addresses, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and Web site addresses).
- C Annual “Crime Victims’ Rights and Crime Prevention Commemorative Calendar.”
- C List of *INFOLINK* Bulletins available free from the National Center for Victims of Crime (800–FYI–CALL).

Participant resource packages should include a cover page with the title and date of the presentation, as well as a “table of contents” with page numbers for easy reference by presenters during the training session.

Knowles, M. S. 1980. *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Seymour, A. 1987. *Developing a Speakers' Bureau*. Fort Worth, TX: National Center for Victim of Crime.