



Finding your voice: the importance of public speaking for dental professionals

As dental professionals, we spend much time communicating with our patients. Effective communication is essential for providing the best possible care, from discussing oral hygiene to explaining treatment options and postoperative management. However, many dental practitioners are hesitant or even afraid to speak in public or present at a professional conference. Public speaking is an essential skill for dental professionals and should be taught in dental schools and continuing education courses.

First of all, public speaking is crucial for sharing knowledge and advancing the field of dentistry. Whether it is presenting research findings at a conference or delivering a lecture, public speaking is an important way to share expertise and contribute to the dental community. By effectively communicating ideas, one can inspire others and contribute to the ongoing advancement of knowledge. Furthermore, public speaking is a powerful tool for building relationships with patients and the wider community. By giving talks on oral health, a dental professional can establish themselves as a trusted and knowledgeable expert in the field and thus improve patients' health. This can help build trust and loyalty among patients, as well as promote the importance of oral health to the broader community.

Many practitioners, however, struggle with public speaking, often due to anxiety or lack of experience. This is understandable, as public speaking can be intimidating, even for knowledgeable professionals. With practice and preparation, it is possible to improve one's public speaking abilities and become more confident and effective in communicating with others.

A common strategy to improve public speaking is to prepare and collect data prior to finalizing the presentation. Preparation is critical when it comes to public speaking. It is important to take the time to research the topic thoroughly and prepare the materials in advance. A strong background will not only equip the speaker with confidence during the talk and make them prepared to answer questions, but also will result in a high-level and cutting-edge presentation.

Planning the lecture to fit well into the given time frame is also essential. An optimal speaking pace will allow the audi-

ence to follow easily. Rushing fast to deliver as much content as possible may result in losing the audience's attention and compromising the delivered message. A presentation that extends beyond the planned time can be interpreted as disrespectful by the audience. Alternatively, it may result in shortened content and missing the main message. As questions are often expected at the end of the talk, specific time should be set aside to allow answers, without compromising the actual presentation time.

Furthermore, the presentation should be practiced several times before the event, ideally in front of a friend or colleague who can offer constructive feedback. The low-pressure setting helps build confidence and practice speaking and time management skills in a supportive environment. The practice should focus on the presentation's speaking pace, time management, coherence, and clarity. Ensuring continuity between the topics and slides is essential when practicing. The most cutting-edge presentation can fail if poorly delivered.

To reduce pressure, remember that public speaking is not about being perfect. Even the most experienced speakers can make mistakes or get nervous. The key is to remain focused on the message and communicate it as clearly and effectively as possible. The lecture should be built around the main topic, and it is important for the speaker to keep the talk focused on delivering that message. A lack of focus on the main message may result in an unorganized talk, often packed with details, but, sometimes, worthless for the audience.

Since public speaking is an inseparable part of the dental profession, more attention should be given to the subject through constructive education. Although predoctoral and postgraduate dental programs include case presentations, feedback about the delivery is often overlooked, and is mainly focused on the content. Public speaking can be taught and practiced as a separate subject at the predoctoral, postgraduate, and continuing education levels. Continuing education courses offering public speaking training to dental professionals would be valuable as well.

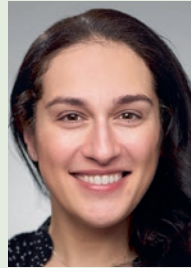


Editorial

By preparing thoroughly, practicing speaking at an easy-to-follow pace within a given timeframe, and remaining focused on the message, one can improve public speaking abilities and become a more effective and confident communicator.

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