The keys to making effective presentations
Aims and Objectives

• Aim: to explore the psychological aspects of making presentations and to reflect on how our childhood conditioning can affect our ability to present
Aims and Objectives

• Objectives – by the end of the session attendees will be able to:
  – Create a simple presentation structure
  – Describe some practical ways of managing emotions
  – ‘Look’ to be more empowered
  – Use strategies that enhance support
  – Question out-of-date belief systems
‘Normal’

• It’s quite normal (human) not to like presenting in front of others
• Many actors are shy and nervous around others (when they set aside their acting persona)
‘Normal’

• It is possible to learn how to present in a more enjoyable way
• The expectation that we should be relaxed when presenting is unrealistic
Preparation

• Most people spend most time preparing content – ‘what is going to be spoken about’

• No time is given to personal management, which is the most important aspect of the presentation, and which gives it impact
Prepare well

• Know your subject – remember: you don’t have to know **everything** about it!

• Use notes or cards to refer to if necessary (unless you have a good memory that works well under pressure)
Prepare well

- Create a simple structure for your presentation
- Rehearse it – allow for spaces in your delivery
- Admit when you don’t know things
Structure

- Attempt to structure your presentation simply, for example:

  Introduction
  3 x main points
  Summary statement
  Q/A
Learning Styles

Use objects or images to enhance your message

• Words don’t appeal to everyone’s learning style
• “A picture paints a thousand words”
Emotional Intelligence

• **Be what you are**...and know that there is more to you than you think!

• We get stressed when we try to be what we are not

• Anxiety is only unsupported excitement
  – Support is enhanced by deeper breathing, solid stance, exercise, rest, supportive self-talk, healthy food and water
Emotional Intelligence

• If we can accept that anxiety is normal and part of making presentations we will get less anxious about being anxious

• Own, accept and support yourself
  – Don’t deny what you feel, admit it (even to yourself) then support yourself in having this feeling - not by trying to get rid of it
Childhood Programming

• Generally we are socially conditioned to be ‘pleasing’ toward others

• As young children the cost of not pleasing means rejection by those we love and need: **this prospect is terrifying for a child**

• As an adult, such rejection is....
Childhood Programming

....survivable!
Childhood Programming

• It’s **ok for you to be you** now that you are an adult, although some people won’t like it
• You’ve got nothing to prove as a person (you are already ‘enough’)
• Children sometimes get the idea that they are not enough and have been given ‘conditions of worth’ by well intended care-givers
Distorted Images

We can get mixed up messages about ourselves as we grow up, and as a result, see ourselves in ways that are judgmental, limiting and inaccurate.

With adult maturity, help from others, and determination we can change these self-perceptions, and start seeing ourselves in a better more realistic light.
Re-Programming as an Adult

• As an adult we can review, reconsider and even update our early programming
• We can realise that ‘it is ok to be me’
• We can start questioning old beliefs (‘Am I really a bad person?’ ‘Do I truly have to be the best?’)
• We can start to see tutors as equals (although they may have more experience and knowledge)
Impact of Childhood Programming on Presentations

• Often presentation situations ‘trigger’ old feelings of judgement and not being good enough
• As such, we can feel looked at, exposed, and self-conscious
‘Looked at’

There is an easy cure for this....
....to look!
How effectively do you ‘look’?
How effectively do you ‘look’?

If you haven’t already done so please please **put your mobile phones off!**
How effectively do you ‘look’?

• We often ‘see’ with our imagination
• We look psychologically to see what we expect to see, and we often see what we are used to seeing – rejection, ridicule, judgement
• Really ‘looking’ means using our eyes
‘Looking’

Use your visual sense and notice:
What colour clothes your audience wears?
What jewellery you can see?
What kind of glasses do people have?
Look at eye colours
What colour is the carpet, walls?
What kind of lights are there?
What type of clock?
What marks can you see on the wall?
‘Looking’

• Noticing your surroundings before you go into the room will help calm you down.

• As an added bonus, if possible go to the room the presentation is being held in on the day before – as you look around from each corner repeat to yourself...

  ‘...this is MY room’
Successful Presenting..

SOME GENERAL TIPS...
Your tutors won’t like this....

• Aim for average

When we aim to be perfect, our nervous system gets more stressed, and as a result we are ‘trying’ rather than letting our natural ability emerge.
Your tutors won’t like this....

• Aim for average

When we aim for average, our nervous system is more relaxed and paradoxically we often produce higher quality performance
Subject or You?

• The presentation is about the subject it’s not about YOU, so keep this in mind and direct attention to ‘it’ not ‘me’
Your Passion

• Attempt to find in the subject something you feel really passionate about; then see if you can touch the audience with some of your passion
Support from Others

• Search out supportive faces in the audience, and those who seem interested
• Don’t look at people who aren’t interested; don’t be interested in them – preserve your precious interest and attention only for those who deserve it!
Self Support

• Anger and impatience towards oneself is rarely helpful
• Learning to like ourselves, even just a little bit, is a great asset
• Understanding the basics of how our brain and nervous systems work makes it easier to self-soothe (Book: The Chimp Paradox, by Steve Peters)
Poor presentations

• These are not the end of the world
• We need to make occasional poor ones in order to become better – we generally learn best from errors NOT from the things we get right
• All good presenters have made poor presentations
• We just need to...GET OVER IT...and have another go!
Humour

• As a general rule – don’t use humour, unless you have made several presentations that have went well
• Develop the ability to smile at yourself
• Humour is invaluable in helping us see things from a different perspective
Always Celebrate

• Review your presentation
  – What went well?
  – What would you like to improve on?

This will give you a positive mindset for future presentations
Further Help

Counselling Service
14 Oxford St
Liverpool
L69 7WX