

The 4 Cornerstones of a Successful Presentation

The four cornerstones:

1. Know Yourself
2. Know Your Material
3. Know Your Purpose
4. Know Your Audience

Know Yourself

- What is your style? Some of us may be very engaging as we talk and educate our peers. Others of us would prefer to facilitate a small group discussion among participants. You need to know your style so that you can create a presentation that is effective because you are comfortable presenting it.
- What are your skills? Are you a great photographer, artist? Are you familiar with lots of movies and can connect them to health and safety issues? Is it easy and comfortable for you to use humor? Do you have acting abilities? Use your unique skills to make the presentation interesting.
- What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
 - Start with your strengths.
 - Work to improve your weaknesses.

Know Your Material

This may seem a bit obvious, but thoroughly knowing the topic you will present and where your information comes from will increase your confidence as a presenter.

Content: Practice makes perfect. It's okay to use notes, but avoid reading to your audience

Research: Where can you get the information? If you use websites, use credible websites. Look for government websites or websites maintained by national associations.

Data/Statistics: Use these to get the attention of your audience. If there is data available from surveys conducted on your campus, use the information to show that your topic has an impact on your campus. Be sure you know the source of your data. You are likely to get questions about the source of your information. Knowing the source increases your credibility.

Resources: When presenting on health and safety issues, you want your audience to be able to take action or make a change in their behavior and attitudes. Hand out pamphlets about your topic during your presentation. Be sure to provide a list of campus and community resources. Include hotline numbers and websites for more information.

The 4 Cornerstones of a Successful Presentation

Know Your Purpose

- Why are you doing this presentation?
- Do you want to:
 - Provide information
 - Increase awareness
 - If this is your purpose, your presentation should define the issue and provide data about its prevalence among your student population. Remember to present information in a positive manner. Emphasize that most students are making healthy choices and you want to help the minority of students who experience problems.
 - Change attitudes
 - Create emotion
 - Once students' awareness of an issue has been raised, your purpose may be to change attitudes. To change attitudes, you need to tap into students' emotions. Providing factual information about current behavior and evidence of the direct impact of health and safety issues on students can have an impact. Personal stories of students who have been affected can motivate your audience to take action.
 - Build new skills
 - Experiential activities can teach new skills: role plays, simulations, or writing exercises.

Know Your Audience

Who you present to can determine what and how you present.

- Age
- Knowledge base
- Culture

The 4 Cornerstones of a Successful Presentation

- Purpose for attending
 - If students are required to attend, there may be some resistance; you can help participants to become engaged.