PRESENTATION SKILLS – DELIVERY AND VISUAL AIDS

Watching a presentation there are two elements to **engage** us: the speaker, and the visual aids they're using. As the presenter, we aim to create **impact** by using ourselves (our body, voice and words) and also, visual images and, sometimes, sounds.

In module 3, we looked at structure and preparation, so here we will be thinking about what the presentation as a whole looks and sounds like, and how that makes the audience feel.

Everyone presenting wants to look and sound confident, to use the space well and to create a varied and engaging experience.

How do you want to be remembered? Let's start with the thing they notice first how you look. Obviously dress is relevant: you need to be dressed appropriately for the occasion, to look smart and most of all, comfortable. Avoid anything that will distract you or your audience from what you are saying.

What is, in my opinion, more important is your body language and posture. If you are relaxed and alert, and use the space with authority, you not only look confident, but allow the audience to focus on what you are saying. Good **alignment** also allows you to breathe properly, which is **vital** for keeping a steady voice. Stand on both feet, and feel balanced and strong; Imagine growing a little taller, and let your **spine** relax. Tension not only looks bad, but feels bad. Be comfortable standing still and looking at the people you are speaking to. Let them know you are really seeing them, and that you want to create **rapport** with them.

Breathing is next. For speaking, we need full, calm breathing not the quick breathing that happens when we are nervous. Learn to let your breath drop deep into your lungs and realize that it is also the fuel for your voice.

Move around if you want to, but make your movement purposeful: don't walk around **aimlessly.** Practice using your hands to illustrate and emphasize your points. Try and keep them relaxed and don't put them in your pocket for too long
Think about how you can best use the space you are in.

Now. The other element I mentioned was external visuals. What visual aids might you use to help bring the presentation to life? Powerpoint is probably the first thing you think of, but it isn't the only option, and can be used well or badly. I expect you've heard the phrase 'death by Powerpoint' before. Too many slides with too many words 'What is it there for?' I want to shout. 'Turn it off!'

It should only be there to add value to what you are saying: it should never be a **prompt**, and is not there to duplicate you. You are the main focus. You are the speaker.
It can be a wonderful resource: show pictures that illustrate what you are exploring. Show video clips. Make your own video. Use it to show key statistics or **quotes** that you particularly want the audience to remember. But DON'T fill it with **bullet points**. Please.

Graphs and diagrams can be good. If you use graphs, keep them simple to read - and make explain them to us.

And remember: you can use the black-out button. Practice turning the Powerpoint off when it's not needed. It brings the focus back on to you the speaker.

The bottom line is, with all of this: if something adds value, use it. If it doesn't, lose it.