Presentation Guidelines: ‘How to’ Create a Presentation

Plan the presentation
- **Topic** What will I talk about? What message do I need to convey?
- **Purpose** Why am I giving the presentation: to inform, persuade, motivate?
- **Audience** Who am I speaking to, what is our relationship, what do they need to know? How will they feel about the message? What might they ask?
- **Environment** Where will I give the presentation, how is the room set up, what are the audiovisual capabilities?

Prepare the presentation
- **Define objective** What do I want my audience to do as a result of the presentation? Focus on what you want the audience to remember.
- **Create a roadmap** Capture ideas on paper, group and label similar information, prioritize the groups, and sequence ideas - eliminate all but need to know information.
- **Decide on** Visual media, handouts, etc.

Develop the presentation
- **Opening** Focus audience attention, create contact, state purpose, establish credibility, link to audience interest, and preview main points.
- **Main points** Support ideas with examples, quotes, statistics, stories, metaphors, pictures, video, music; use strategies to convey points such as process narrative, compare and contrast, big picture, pros and cons, most important to least important. Use “you” and “your” to link to audience, make the audience work and think, ask questions to be answered, discussed or thought about.
- **Closing** Review main points, provide conclusion, ask for action, thank the audience.

Create visuals to support presentation
- Keep them simple
- Prefer pictures to words
- Show film or video clips
- Avoid small text—anything smaller than 28 pt.
- Never go beyond six lines, six words per line
- Use consistent color scheme, font, headings, format and layout
- Apply the Zonta International or Zonta International Foundation template
- Develop only one main point per visual
- Make slides understandable in 15 to 20 seconds - like a billboard
- Be creative
Manage nervousness
• Prepare
• Practice—rehearse out loud
• Visualize success
• Use deep breathing to regulate adrenaline surge
• Capitalize on energy from nerves to power your voice and gestures
• Remember that the audience wants you to succeed
• Don’t be afraid of stage fright – it is normal. Start and get going!

Delivering a dynamic presentation
• Stand straight and tall
• Keep weight evenly balanced on both legs
• Look at the audience
• Maintain eye contact equally with all sections of the audience
• Project your voice from your diaphragm
• Speak slower than you would in conversation
• Enunciate your words clearly
• Pause from time to time to allow audience to process ideas
• Vary your tone and pacing
• Smile when appropriate
• Use your hands to emphasize points
• Keep hands out of pockets
• Recognize that large gestures mean big ideas
• Avoid or minimize barriers between you and the audience

Using PowerPoint
• Look at the audience, not the screen
• Speak about the visual without reading word for word
• Switch to a blank screen or placeholder slide when not speaking about the visual projected
• Use your arm and hand to indicate what you want the audience to look at
• Keep silent while audience absorbs screen content
• Stand so you do not block the screen from any portion of the audience
• Reference information on a visual by location or shape, not just color
• Avoid pointers because they cause you to speak to the screen
• Be cautious with lasers because they are dangerous
• Put objects down after using them to avoid annoying or distracting the audience
• Follow the rule of no more than one visual per minute
• Remember that YOU are the presentation; the visual is the message/audience support