

Hints and Tips Delivering Presentations and Training

About these Tips

There are more and more opportunities for older people to give talks and presentations and to take part in delivering training to workers.

- It is part of people who use services having more say in the types of support that are provided.
- It is also part of people contributing to policies and plans that affect people living in their area.

Some people enjoy giving presentations, while other people would like to contribute but don't feel they have the skills and confidence.

Some older people have had positive experiences and have found this is a good way to influence public bodies and big organisations and improve services used by older people. Other people have felt that their contribution was not respected.

These tips are for anyone who wants to make the contribution of older people to activities such as staff training and conferences positive for everyone involved.

We hope they are also useful for other people who are giving presentations on topics that are important to them.

- There are sections on the stages of giving a presentation.
- For each, we have tips for older people giving the talk and for the people who are organising the session.
- There are tips on becoming more confident at giving presentations and planning what you want to say.
- Many older people who do this are part of groups, such as an Older People's Forum or a Carers' Group. We have tips for the groups on ways to support each other.

These Hints and Tips draw on the experiences of people who have been part of events where older people have contributed and had a voice. We want to thank everyone who helped.

Examples

Situations where older people deliver presentations and training

- Giving a talk to a group of older people or another community group about the work of an Older People's Forum.
- Being a speaker or leading a workshop at a participation event, where the focus is on ways in which more people can have their say.
- Being part of a training session for staff in health or social work services, or a team that is delivering direct care or support.
- Giving presentations about how services can be better for older people or people with dementia to staff in organisations that serve the public – such as schools, the Fire Service, supermarkets and transport providers.
- Talking to people who have or may soon need support services to raise their awareness about an idea or arrangement that they were not familiar with – such as Self Directed Support or people with long-term conditions doing more to manage their own health and wellbeing.

- Giving a short workshop presentation and then facilitating a discussion at a conference about policies or services for older people.
- Giving a keynote speech at a conference to a large audience.
- An older person and a worker in a care service giving a joint presentation to a staff team.
- Talking part in a structured training course as a co-trainer.
- Talking about a service that is led by older people and others in your community, to show other people the impact this can have.

... and many more.

Examples

The messages older people want to get across

These are some of the messages that the people who helped develop these Hints and Tips raised in the training and presentations that they delivered.

- Explaining to health care staff how to work with older people to enable them to remain as independent as possible and be confident about managing their own health and well-being.
- Giving a different perspective to service providers from people who actually use the services.
- Getting staff in public bodies and people who lead community groups to understand how they sometimes exclude people from minority communities - even if this is not what they intended - and how to include everyone.
- Showing workers who deal with the public how they can make small changes that will lead to their services working better for people who have dementia.
- Encouraging older people to come together to have a say and to provide activities that benefit older people in their local area.
- Identifying locally based solutions for people's health and social care needs.
- Showing health and care staff how to work in partnership with older people to develop these local solutions.
- Showing that there are ways to prevent older people being socially isolated.
- Reminding people about the contributions older people make to their community and challenging the view of older people as dependent and just as people needing support.

Arranging the presentation

Most occasions when an older person is giving a talk or training begin when a worker who is organising an event wants to have an older person's or service user's contribution.

- They can contact a Forum or local group led by older people and ask if someone can do this.
- They can ask a worker in a service that supports people to ask someone who uses that service.
- They can contact someone they already know – such as an older person they saw giving a presentation before.

There are steps that both the person organising the event and the person giving the presentation can take to make it work well for everyone.

Our first tip here – and for every stage of this topic – is to remember that there can be a conversation and that initial plans can be changed.

Our second tip is to remember that there are several possible answers to a request to take part in training or an event:

- Yes, I'll do it.
- No.
- I can't do it, but someone else may be able to do it and I'll ask them.
- It depends: yes if we can find an arrangement that works for me/our team.

"I've learned that the best things to say at that first phone call are 'When can we meet to talk it over?' and 'I'll check with the rest of the group and get back to you.'"



National Standards for Community Engagement

The National Standards for Community Engagement bring together good practice for people who use services or the public working alongside or influencing public bodies. They are endorsed by the Scottish Government, the NHS and Councils. The standards are useful when thinking about people making a contribution through events and training.

www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/NationalStandards

Tips for people giving presentations

Check that you understand the purpose of the event or training, and who the audience will be.

Think about the practical aspects: where it is and how you can get there, the date and time. Think about what works for you, so you can suggest an alternative arrangement if the first plan is not convenient.

Say if you prefer to do this as a couple of people giving the presentation together.

Ask about the details of your slot: How long is it? How many people are expected? Will there be questions or a discussion after your presentation? Where does it come in the programme?

If it is part of a bigger event or series of training sessions, find out who else is giving talks. That way you can build on another speaker's input, or plan how you will explain that you have a different point of view.

Check if the organiser is expecting you to describe personal experiences (your own or those of other older people), or to talk about general issues. This can help you decide who is the best person to give this presentation. There are more tips on this later on.

Tips for organisers

Arrange a meeting with the speaker to talk over what you both want to get out of the presentation as well as the practical aspects. Or at least have a phone call when neither of you is rushed.

Think about how flexible you can be on aspects such as location and timing. Aim to fit around the person who is giving their time to help you.

Think about the practical aspects that can make it possible for someone to contribute. Remember that many older people who come along as speakers are from small community groups with few resources, and the person may themselves have health problems. Examples include:

- Paying travel expenses on the day or promptly afterwards, or arranging their travel for them.
- Checking access to the venue for someone who finds walking difficult.
- Arranging the copies of their handouts and other materials, rather than expecting them to do that.

“Remember that people may need different things at different times. For example, someone might be ok with doing a morning session in summer but not in the winter when it is cold and dark and travel is more difficult. Or they did a session on their own last year but since then have been unwell and need more support now.”

“We’ve found an initial conversation is a good way for us to remind event organisers about making the whole event inclusive. We ask about points such as access for people who walk slowly as well as for people using wheelchairs, check there is an induction loop, and ask about signs to make it dementia-friendly. That way we feel we have an impact even before we say anything!”

“You have no idea what a difference it makes when someone says they will book a parking place for us. It’s showing our input is valued as well as the practical aspect.”



Tips for people giving presentations and for organisers

Lots of people find PowerPoint and other technologies - such as film and audio clips - really useful when doing a talk. Other people do not like using it.

If you are not confident with this:

- Find someone who can help you learn. Then practice using it on your own before the event.
- Have someone there on the day who can quickly sort out any problems that arise.
- Keep it simple to begin with. Then you can learn to do the fancier features.

If a speaker is using PowerPoint and other technology:

- Make sure they know how the organiser wants to handle this. For example, many organisers like to get everyone's presentations sent to them a few days before the event, to get them onto a single computer.
- Take along a memory stick with the presentation, just in case you need it.
- Also take along a paper copy of what you want to say – just in case the technology doesn't work.

If someone is using their notes and just talking, without using technology:

- Remember this is ok.
- Discuss how the organiser can get a copy of the presentation, if they want to have this.
- Organisers can help here – for example, getting a speaker's notes typed for them and then checking the notes with the person.

Agree beforehand whether the presentation is being shared with other people. Copies of all the PowerPoint slides are often sent out to everyone who attended, and to other people.

- Does the presentation make sense to anyone who just sees the slides and does not hear the talk?
- Think about how you can cover any important points that are said but do not have any images or notes.
- Are there parts that the speaker wants to take out before the presentation is circulated more widely?

- Are there additional points that the speaker wants to include for this wider audience? An example could be a point that came up in a discussion after the talk, or more background to explain something in more detail.

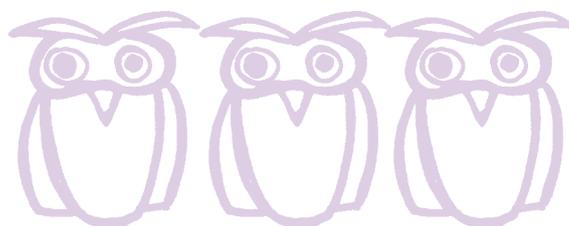
Handing out notes can also be a good way of helping people understand more about the message the speaker wants to get across.

- Some organisers give a copy of the presentations as part of the 'event pack'.
- But these could be given round after the presentation if a speaker wants to do it this way.
- You can also include other materials, such as more details about your group or the issues.

"I like to ask the audience how many older people they think are affected by mental health problems, or are in volunteering, or live independently – whatever I'm talking about – and then give them the answer. I don't want them sneaking a look at this before I'm ready."

"I used to hate PowerPoint. Now I've learned how to bring in photographs and I use it all the time. It's a good way to remind the audience that there are lots of older people getting on with our lives, and to show the diversity among older people."

"When we do staff training sessions we usually have all the copies of the presentations ready on our intranet. But the lady from the Carers' Group doesn't do it that way – she just comes along and talks. I spent ages trying to find a clever way round it. Then on the day I took along a note pad and a pen and wrote down as much as I could. I sent her the notes next day and she had them checked and back to me in a week. Everyone was happy. We got the best feedback from colleagues about that day, as her description of her family had real emotional impact. And I learned a lot from her about the benefits of people who use services contributing to our training and how to make it much less stressful."



Making it an effective event

Tips for people delivering the presentation

Give yourself time to prepare well, so you know from the start that you can do this.

Try to find out how much this audience knows about the topic.

If you are doing this with someone else, decide beforehand how you spread the talk between you and how you will respond to questions.

Feel comfortable physically. Wear clothes that make you feel comfortable. On the day, think about how you are standing or sitting. Try wiggling your shoulders just before you start.

Go along and see the venue beforehand if you can. Even just getting into the room for a few minutes helps, for example just as people are arriving and having their coffee.

Say something out loud, so you get a feel for the acoustics in the room. You can do this before the event starts or at the tea break when the room is quiet. Also try using the microphone if there is one.

Be ready to start with an explanation about your group or why you are giving the presentation. Expect that some people will not be familiar with Older People's Forums, participation groups or older people contributing in this sort of way.

Have a few friends in the audience - such as other members of a group you know or workers from your area - to be there to support and encourage you. If you don't

know people in the group or audience, find a few friendly faces and direct your talk to them.

Another task for friends who support the person giving the presentation is to take photographs that you can later use in your newsletter or website and similar ways. Check that the people involved are ok with this, in the same way as you do for other activities.

Tips for organisers

Remember that some older people are very experienced speakers while others are less experienced and confident.

Think about the practical aspects that will make the person giving the talk be relaxed and able to focus on giving a good presentation. Examples include:

- Using your organisation's arrangements to get them taxis.
- Booking a parking place near the building, especially if it is someone who finds walking more difficult or might find it awkward to carry in their leaflets and display materials.
- Offering refreshments and place to rest after their journey or after their slot.
- Meeting them at the entrance when it is big building or campus.

Ask the person giving the presentation before the session how they want you to introduce them.

Try to get advance information about the reason why an older person is giving this presentation to the people who are coming along – an extra sentence in the programme or publicity should cover it. This is especially useful when their talk is one of a series of training

sessions or presentations that are mostly delivered by people in professional roles.

Think about how you can work with the person giving the presentation to cover the range of issues this audience may want to hear about. For example, if someone is describing how services work from the perspective of older people, you can agree that you or a colleague will spend 5 minutes at the start reminding the audience about the wider policies and practice guidelines that are not part of the person's expertise.

Sometimes the points that older people are raising will be unfamiliar and potentially uncomfortable for people who work in services – and that is why the person was asked to come along. Part of your role may be finding a way for the person to get their points over and help the audience understand the issues.

- Do not let the session become one or 2 people responding to lots of people asking questions, whether it is enthusiasm or challenging what the speaker said.
- Breaking up into smaller groups or having a break before the discussion/ questions can create better dynamics for a discussion.
- You can remind the audience or participants of other opportunities they have to talk in detail about what this means for their own policies and practice.
- Remember that if people get too excited, or if the discussion ever gets really grumpy, you can end the talk or a workshop session early.
- Ending the session early also works if you are trying to get a discussion going and no-one wants to say anything.

Discussions

Tips for people giving presentations and for organisers

Check beforehand if the plan is to follow the talk with questions or a discussion.

Remember that the speaker is not responsible for keeping the discussion going, or responding to all the questions.

The person giving the presentation, or the person introducing them, might want to ask the audience a question early on, to gauge the knowledge of the people who are there.

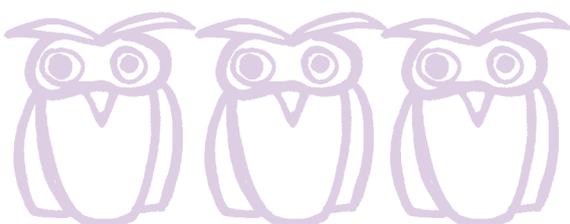
You may also want to make the presentation interactive and involve the audience. Plan together how you are going to do this.

Before the event, or even just before the discussion, ask a few people in the audience to help get the conversation going. For example, they could be staff who you work with, or people from an older people's group in another area.

Agree before the event how you are going work together to handle questions. Most people decide that the organiser will deal with any awkward questions or comments, or when people raise points on other issues.

You can also put a question back to the group: 'That's an interesting point. What happens in other people's experience?' This gives you both time to think.

"The first time I gave a talk I was that nervous. But the chap who was chairing the day was great – told me we were partners, and showed me how we could give each other signals, such as time to start winding up now, I'll handle this question."



After the event

Tips for people giving presentations

Relax and feel good about what you have achieved.

Make notes on anything you - or other older people doing this sort of thing - may find useful for the next presentation.

- What bits went well?
- Is there anything you would change?
- Did you get ideas from the way other people gave presentations, or from the discussion?

Do you want to send the people in the audience more materials about your group, or about the issues you were talking about? Do you want to give them extra leaflets for colleagues who were not there?

Ask the organiser about feedback from people who were there and what that team or organisation will do next.

Think about ways to continue the contact, to enable the people in that setting to understand more about the experience and perspective of older people. There may steps that an older people's group or a community project can do as the next stage.

- You can write to thank them for the invitation to speak, and add in additional points and suggestions on topics that came up in discussion.
- Can you invite them along to a group meeting, or a members' event?

You can suggest meeting with the person who organised the event for coffee and talking over what you can each do as the next step.

Think about how you can tell other older people about what happened – the opportunity to influence how services work and for older people to have a voice, and the impact it had.

- You can write a piece for your own newsletter.
- Ask the Forum or any national networks to take a description of giving the talk and influencing this group or staff (or whoever).
- It does not need to be the person who gave the talk who does the newsletter items. This is another good way for more people to be part of engaging with other organisations and having an impact.
- Ask the organiser if they have any photographs from the event that you can use in places like newsletters. Even if you did manage to get photos, they may have some that show a different aspect of the day.

Tips for organisers

Get in touch to say thank you.

Check if the person has any additional expenses, such as a taxi home.

Find out how the person giving the presentation feels: Pleased about the response and feedback from the audience? Upset by remembering difficult experiences, annoyed at a question or response?

Ask if there are any issues or questions that the person giving the presentation wants to discuss with you, such as points other people raised at the event.

Think about your own follow up from the event.

- Would it be useful if you or other people met with older people to learn more about their experiences and ideas?
- Can you link into an existing participation route, such as a Forum?

“Remember that other people want to see that older people do have an impact. Get double the benefit from giving the talk by featuring it in the next newsletter and getting it on to your website or Facebook page. Photos of the person who gave the talk, them with other speakers or organisers, others from the group who went along, and so on. Quotes from people about how good the presentation was and how it made people understand the challenges older people face.”

“For introductions, I want: ‘This is Mary, who has been working for many years to improve services for people living in this area.’ Not: ‘Mary is an older person who uses services.’ It’s about respecting all the things I - and many other older people - do as part of this community. It’s also about moving away from the assumptions and power that can be part of phrases like patient and service-user.”

Building up confidence as a speaker or trainer

Tips for people giving presentations

These are some ways people have found helped them build up their confidence.

The suggestions will work for people who have not done this sort of thing before, for people who might be feeling a bit wobbly, and for people who haven’t done this for a while and want to get back into it again.

Start small and build up

- If you are part of a Forum or group that gets asked to provide speakers, take turns in your group at practising giving presentations.
- Talk to a drop-in, a small group or at a team meeting of some staff you already know.
- Go along with someone who has done it before, and offer to help out at workshops etc.
- Work in pairs and get support from each other.

Get some practice

- You can practice with your friends and family.
- Try to practice with people who have not yet heard your presentation in the run up to the training session or the event.
- Practice using PowerPoint and then decide if this is something that you find helpful.

Find out how other people do it

- You can go along to training events, conferences and different types of events, to get the feel of them.
- Watch how the people doing presentations and workshops do it.
- Look for ideas that you would want to use – such as ways to make people feel relaxed, get a point across.

Recognise your own skills

- You might be good at group work and supporting small groups of people, but not realise that these are the same skills for facilitating a workshop at a conference.

Get to know your topic well

- Find out about current policies or ideas through networks such as Scottish Older People’s Assembly, so you are up to date.
- This increases your confidence and makes it easier if people ask you questions.

- It is also ok to decide that you are not going to bother with the wider context, and say that you will just describe the experiences of your family or of the people in your group.

Be aware of your own needs

- If you are busy or having a difficult time, you can turn down requests that you would do at other times.
- If you find talking about your own or a relative's experience upsets you, don't do it. Instead, read out a quote from someone else, or tell a story that is based on someone else and uses different names etc.

Remember all the things that help you feel good about yourself in any situation

- Put positive sayings and images on your fridge.
- Look after yourself – have good food, go for a walk.
- Spend time talking to people who make you feel good about yourself and are good fun to be with.
- Do something nice afterwards
- Give yourself time to wind down.

“Believe in yourself. You are the one who knows what you are talking about.”

“The first time I gave a talk at a conference I practiced what I was going to say with the group, my family, my pals - anyone who would listen. They all gave me encouragement and some good suggestions. On the day my friend came with me and after it we went for tea at a special cake shop.”

“I had given a talk to the local community nursing team. Then they suggested our group to speak at a bigger event for the senior managers in the Health Board. So two of us did it together and before the big day we went back to that community team and practiced our new talk on them.”

Tips for organisers

Remember that people may need some time and encouragement to build up their confidence as a speaker.

Remember that anyone can find it hard when talking about personal experiences.

Look out for ways to encourage older people – and others, such as workers who deliver services – to get experience. Examples can be:

- Smaller, friendly situations, where more people can get practice.
- Smaller workshops at bigger events.
- Workers and people from community groups doing this together.

“The first time I spoke was when the manager of the support service that helps me at home asked me to talk at a staff training session. Most of the time my service is great but there had been a problem and they wanted to make sure it didn't happen again. We did it as the manager asking me a question and me replying, so I knew what was coming and couldn't get lost. The first day, it was only 5 or 6 people, and it all went fine. The next time, it was for 20 or 30 staff who were just starting. Again, we planned the questions first. Since then I've spoken at many staff training days and at bigger events as I'm much more confident now.”



How you say it – ways to get the message across

Tips for people giving presentations

The aim of delivering training or bringing people together to hear from you and other speakers is to influence what they do. This section looks at ways to get over the message you want to give.

Balance the content

Any audience will usually include both ‘head’ people and ‘heart’ people.

- ‘Head’ people respond to information: This is what the policies say, this is the research evidence, this is what has happened in other places and it worked ok there, this is logical and sensible.
- ‘Heart’ people respond to feelings, especially their own: This is a person’s experience, this is how it felt, how would you feel? Have you been in a situation where you were getting over a difficult experience?
- Most of us respond best to a mix of ‘head’ and ‘heart’ messages.

Our main tip here is to bring in a mix of ‘head’ and ‘heart’ material to a presentation.

These are sources of ‘head’ material:

- Evidence collected by the national networks.
- Research reports.
- National policies from the Scottish Government and/or UK Government.
- Local strategies on services for older people.
- The local Community Plan.

These are sources of ‘heart’ material:

- DVDs or film clips produced for the national networks and by local groups.
- People’s personal experiences.

Case example

A group of older people from South Asian communities were giving a talk to the local mental health team about the difficulties older people have getting access to mental health services, and the added barriers people in BME communities face.

They started with quotes from the official policies, which said the aim was good mental health and wellbeing for everyone.

Then they listed the figures from official statistics: higher levels of mental health problems such as depression and anxiety for older people than for younger adults, but lower rates of diagnosis and treatment.

This was the ‘head’ part. Then they moved to the ‘heart’ part of getting over their message.

They showed a film, which students from a local college had helped them make. Members of the group described their own experiences – how unwell they felt, the impact on their lives and what happened when they tried to get help.

The people in the film also talked about the benefits they got from the peer support group.

Most of the accounts were by people who felt no-one was listening to them. But there was one person who had got good support from her GP and who was doing well – which showed how things should work and could be different.

They ended by reminding people of the policies, and how people’s experiences do not reflect that – which was joining up the head and heart aspects.

Make it relevant to this event

Use examples and extracts from policies that explain the message you want to get across. You don’t have to include everything you know on the subject.

Try to include examples that show how the points you are raising are relevant to people in that role.

- For example, have something about older people as carers, or how things affect carers of older people, if you are talking to a group of carers.
- Make the connection with the role of staff in this role and setting.
- Show how older people contributed their experiences and how this led to changes when talking to community groups or to staff in public bodies or care services who are interested in co-production.

Check it out before each talk. What worked well for you a few months ago may not be right for this occasion and this audience. Or you may want to update something to reflect recent changes in services or people's experiences.

Using your own experiences

You can use your own experiences if you want to. But you don't have to. And you can do it on some occasions but not on others.

Here are our tips on ways to keep yourself safe if you do tell your own experiences.

- Remember that you are giving a talk rather than talking through something between friends or in a therapeutic way. Make it a teaching story: 'What this shows is...'
- Go over it beforehand with someone else, as they may have suggestions on the order you use to describe things, or when to pause, or how to describe something that was difficult for you or might be difficult for your audience.
- Edit it – you may want to use one part of your experience for one talk, and another part for a different audience.
- Take out details such as places and names. Most of the personal details won't be needed to get the point across.
- Say it out loud. Sometimes there are things that are ok when you write them down but catch you out when you say the words. Or there are long sentences that are tricky to say in a talk.
- Remember that your talk, or at least your slides or handout, may end up being circulated more widely through websites. Don't include anything that you are not happy to have shared in this way.

These are alternatives to using your own story.

- Quotes that have been used in official policies or research, or reports by other people.
- Use other people's experiences, if they are ok with this.
- Use your own story, but tell it is if it was someone else's with different names and saying 'he/she did...' instead of 'I did...'
- Use DVDs or other ways to show people talking about their experiences.

What you need – resources

This is a list of practical materials that people have found are useful when they are giving talks or doing training.

- A leaflet with contact details for your group or Forum.
- Something such as a leaflet that explains about the ideas you are telling them about. You do not have to produce this yourself. For example, there are good materials from Alzheimer Scotland on dementia-friendly communities, and materials from the Scottish Government and voluntary organisations about ways for people to get more choice in the care services they use.
- A collection of photographs and DVDs or film clips on your computer, which you can use as part of the talks.
- A list of useful websites.

"We have the Talks Box – a sturdy box with leaflets about our group, dementia-friendly tips, lists of useful websites and sources of help for anyone who is looking for advice for themselves or someone they care about. We top it up regularly, so the person giving the talk doesn't have to worry about that."

"We've built up a good collection of people's stories – positive experiences, poor ones, older people from different circumstances. We can all use them as case examples. It helps us match the examples to the point we want to get across. It also saves using the same few stories over and over again and avoids the risk of people who have heard us give talks before thinking 'I've heard all this' and not listening."

"I try to work in a photo of my mum into one of my slides. I think of her looking down and helping me, of us doing this together and making things better for other people."

"I had talked about my husband's care before – what went well, what was not good. I thought I was ok with it. But this time I got upset. But I was doing it with a friend and she just moved on to the next slide and covered the next bit of our talk. Afterwards people came up and said they appreciated what we were doing and it showed how poor services affect people. So it was all ok. But it reminded us to plan for that sort of thing."

Tips for groups

Groups led by older people are an important part of older people having more influence, including giving presentations and being part of training for other people.

Look at how you remind people you are able to give presentations.

- Include it in your leaflets and other publicity material.
- Have examples in newsletters, reports and the website and Facebook page.

Think about how you encourage people to do this. It is good to build up a pool of people with skills and confidence.

- It helps avoid the situation of a few people becoming overloaded.
- You will avoid the risks that come when only one or a few people do it, such as that person becoming unwell or being busy with other things in their life.
- It is easier to respond when more people start asking you to speak to them – which is what many groups want to see happening.
- It gets over the message of older people learning skills and making contributions.

Build in opportunities for more people to learn how to do this role. Examples of the type of support you can give are:

- Training for trainers sessions.
- Mentoring or buddying from someone with more experience.
- Opportunities to progress: starting out as a helper and then moving on to be a co-trainer and then a lead trainer or presenting at bigger events.

Have opportunities for people to be part of the team of people who give talks, but in other roles.

- Be the listener for someone who is planning what they are going to say.
- Support people who deliver the training or give the talks by being in the audience, nodding agreement and leading the applause.
- Organise the transport – check train tickets, find where to park the car or minibus, have a map.
- Organise the handouts and back up materials.

- Take the photos, get short audio and film clips with the person giving the presentation and other speakers, talk to the audience about what they are taking from the session, and so on.
- Write about the event afterwards for newsletters and other ways you share what you are doing.

After people have given a presentation, have someone to talk over with them how it went – the good bits as well as anything they want to change next time.

Get together every few months to talk over how things are going around giving talks.

- Are there materials you want to develop, such as extra leaflets?
- Think about ways to build up your collective skills and get more people involved.
- Also try to spend some time together when you just enjoy each other's company. That helps you understand each other, which helps if you ever have to improvise a bit.

If you get a lot of requests to give talks, have one person who is guardian of the contacts list and the diary – who keeps it updated and circulates information to the others. It can be someone who already takes a similar role for other work in your group, or it might help if you take turns to do this role.

Keep a list of contact details for each other and know what each person can do:

- Days/times they can manage.
- How much notice they need.
- Topics, audiences and situations they are willing to cover.

“We wanted to involve people who believe in older people having more choices in our lives. We also needed people who knew how to be a good trainer, so it was a good experience for us and for the people we spoke to. The idea of working as a wee training team felt right for us.”

“We all learn from each other. Each new person brings something more.”

“Bill is great at this but he was getting a lot of requests to do talks. He helped a few of us to also give talks. So now we can share it out, raise the profile of what older people contribute in more places, and Bill has time to enjoy the other parts of his life.”

Partnerships

Sometimes it is a good idea to organise giving talks or training with other groups and people whose experience and skills complement those of your group.

Examples of the training you can deliver together include:

- Joint training on equalities issues for older people, where an older people’s group joins up with a BME or LGBT group.
- Staff and older people who use services working together on training for workers there.
- Someone in a community group and someone in a strategic role telling people in other areas about your local development.

The tips we have suggested for groups also apply here.

“I have really enjoyed working with staff from the health service to give training about dementia awareness. I was a bit down after dad went into the care home but now I feel much better. I’m out and about, meeting lots of people, and I’m using both our experiences to make a difference.”

“Some of our Forum were at a Training for Trainers session with other voluntary groups in our area. One was a BME group. We wanted to practice what we had learned, so we got together and people gave talks about what it was like when they were growing up. People learned a lot about other people’s experiences from that. Since then, we have worked with people from that group to give talks to health services and other organisations on ways to improve access to services for everyone.”

Other Hints and Tips

We have produced other Hints and Tips on related topics:

- Participation by older people.
- Effective partnerships between groups led by older people and public sector teams or other community organisations.
- Effective Co-production.
- Micro enterprises – small scale services run by and for older people.

Wisdom in Practice has its own website www.wisdominpractice.org.uk

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