Outline

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Questions for Discussion
COMMUNICATION APPREHENSIVENESS

Learning to Cope with Anxiety

Learning Objectives

- To learn about the causes of communication anxiety
- To understand the nature of speech anxiety
- To learn how to cope with speech anxiety
Leslie was a quiet retiring man, gentle in manner and soft-spoken. Superficially, he looked like any other person. But appearances were deceptive. Leslie suffered from a condition called social phobia, a fear of evaluation that creates a state of confusion and anxiety in individuals placed in a social situation. Literally any interpersonal encounter—whether ordering a meal at a restaurant, interacting with a grocery clerk, or responding to a request for directions—created mental havoc in Leslie, causing him to stammer, turn red, and become generally incoherent. In order to cope with these extreme levels of social anxiety, Leslie planned every communication event. At home with family members, he would sit alone in a corner, practicing for possible interpersonal encounters, planning even the laughs that he could insert into the conversation. In a restaurant, he would follow the lead of the first person to order, “I’ll have the same.” Any successful social interaction was a major life accomplishment for Leslie, cause to celebrate by repeating the conversation over and over again once he returned home. His brother once remarked that Leslie’s tension was so palpable that it could be felt by everyone in a crowded room.

I suspect that Leslie’s case (a true one) is more extreme than most. However, the National Institute of Mental Health says that anxiety disorders affect 13 percent of Americans between the ages of eighteen and fifty-four. Moreover, a professor at the Anxiety Disorders Clinic (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, University of Toronto Medical School) believes that social phobia is the most common anxiety disorder:

The illness is associated with an intense fear of evaluation in social or performance situations. . . . Among individuals with social phobia, the problem is not only shyness, but also the negative thoughts and feelings that get triggered by their feared situations, which cause them to avoid the situation altogether. Even signing a cheque in front of someone else can be potentially humiliating, because there is the possibility of a nervous shake of the hand. Social phobia is intensely painful and disruptive for those who crack under pressure. Physical symptoms include rapid heart rate, shortness of breath, trembling, and urgency—or failure—to urinate. Other situations commonly feared are public speaking, eating and drinking in a restaurant, and meeting new people. In some cases, the fear escalates to a point where individuals experience panic attacks. . . . For many sufferers of social phobia, what fuels their fears is the desire to be perfect. An array of hypothetical questions floods their minds: What if I say something silly? What if I start sweating? What if I pass out? . . . There are artists who never show their work purely because they are afraid of being evaluated. One question they constantly ask themselves is, “What if it’s not good enough?”

As suggested by this discussion, communication apprehensiveness is a large part of the problem experienced by social phobics. Most feared are situations such as public speaking and meeting new people because they carry the highest threat of evaluation. This chapter focuses on the causes of communication apprehensiveness, situational anxiety of the type experienced by public speakers, and coping strategies.

**Causes of Communication Apprehension**

In 2003, Paul A. Broughton presented a paper at the National Communication Association convention in Miami that summarized twenty years of research into the causes of communication apprehension. Broughton based his review on research
We feel more anxious when communicating . . .

- In unfamiliar and novel situations
- With strangers or people who seem unlike us
- In situations involving evaluation
- With larger audiences
- In more formal situations
- In a nonnative language
- In situations where others have high expectations of our performance
- In situations where we set high personal standards for ourselves
- In situations where we are conspicuous
- In situations where we are ignored
- With people who are of a higher status than ourselves
- After we experience failure

published in Communication Education. Those and other findings help us to understand the kind of anxiety experienced by public speakers. (See the Keep in Mind box.)

Unfamiliar and novel situations create anxiety. The situations that cause the highest levels of anxiety are those in which we face the unfamiliar. Actor Antonio Banderas confessed to being terrified to make his Broadway debut in the musical Nine. Although a seasoned stage performer in his native Spain, he felt completely intimidated by the idea of performing on the historic stages of New York City. He said, “You don’t even know how you’re gonna respond on the stage. You can sing at home, but it’s a different deal. You have to go on stage with an orchestra, having to project for two-and-a-half hours in a play.” Banderas worried unnecessarily; the Outer Critics Circle Broadway/Off-Broadway nominated his production for twelve awards. To overcome his fear of the unfamiliar, French actor Jean-Louis Barrault hid on the set of the stage play Volpone until the director, actors, and stage crew had departed for the night. Then he spent the night sleeping in Volpone’s bed before an imaginary audience to prepare for the next day’s performance.

We experience greater states of anxiety when communicating with strangers than with people whom we know well. Some people stutter and stammer when they communicate with strangers; and children sometimes develop a condition called selective mutism, in which they stop speaking entirely to avoid situations where they must speak to strangers. The term xenophobia refers to an irrational fear and dislike of
people who are different from us. Some people use the term to refer exclusively to racial discrimination; however, the meaning is sufficiently broad to encompass differences of race, gender, culture, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or other distinguishing feature. In general, we tend to gravitate toward people who are similar to us in “values, religion, group affiliation, skills, physical attributes, age, language, occupation, social class, nationality, ethnicity, [and] residential location.”8 Such situations have fewer novel elements and unknown features. We know what to anticipate in interactions with these groups.

We feel heightened states of anxiety in situations involving evaluation.9 When surveyed in 1993–1994 about major sources of stress, competitive gymnasts with the Tops National Team in the U.S. revealed that fear of negative evaluation, fear of making a mistake, and high expectations of self or others were three major sources of stress. One gymnast said that she felt stress “when all of these people are watching you, other people who are better than you, judges watching your every move.” Another said, “I’m afraid I’ll mess up and embarrass myself.”10 Some studies have found that the strongest indicator of speech anxiety is our personal judgment of the kind of impression that we will make.11 With a touch of humor, Virgin Records
Causes of Communication Apprehension

founder Richard Branson recounted his reaction to a situation requiring formal evaluation by the audience:

[Microsoft CEO] Bill Gates invited me to talk to thirty or forty chief executives from around the world. Just before I got up on stage, forms were handed out to everybody, and Gates said, “It’s very important that all of us are tested in our lives. Richard’s about to speak and I’d like you all to mark him out of 10.” Now, that intimidated me. . . . I thought I’d gotten out of school thirty-five years ago. I turned to the guy on my right—I think he was the head of Amazon—and said, “I’ll give you a 10 if you give me a 10.”

The fear of evaluation, in some cases, derives from feelings of vulnerability in situations where our fate moves out of our control, into the hands of someone other than ourselves. The more serious the potential consequences of that loss of control, the more likely we are to feel apprehensive, as in a job interview or custody hearing. The importance of making a positive impression affects our level of anxiety.

We feel more anxious in larger and more formal situations. For the majority of people, this principle holds true. The larger the audience, the greater will be the number of evaluations of the performance. The more formal the situation, the more restrictions and rules apply. However, for some speakers, the reverse is the case. The intimacy of small classroom settings throws off speakers who are used to performing in large formal settings. I have noted, over many years, that some of my most experienced student speakers (e.g., former debaters) are surprised to find that they feel a much higher level of anxiousness in the intimacy of a classroom environment where you can notice every micro-expression that crosses the faces of your audience.

We feel more nervous when we are communicating in a nonnative language. We fear the negative evaluations of those who speak the language more fluently. For anyone who has tried to practice a second language, this principle seems so obvious as not to require extensive authentication.

We feel greater anxiety when others have high expectations of our performance or when we set high personal standards for ourselves. In the competitive figure skating world, people know that the greatest pressure is always upon those who hold last year’s medal. The expectations of a repeat award-winning performance can create excruciatingly high levels of anxiety, even among seasoned performers. The daughters and sons of well-known actors and actresses often experience the same feelings. Actress Bridget Fonda suffered from stage fright for the first two years of her career. She attributes her fears to the fact that people associated her name with Peter Fonda (her grandfather) and Jane Fonda (her aunt). The association carried the probability that she would be judged by different and possibly higher standards than those applied to other fledgling actresses. (See the Question of Ethics box.)

We experience greater apprehension if we anticipate or experience failure. After forgetting the words to several songs in a 1967 concert in Central Park, New York City, Barbra Streisand refused to sing in public for twenty-seven years. At the height of his career, while directing and acting at the National Theatre in London, Sir Lawrence Olivier began to worry that fatigue would cause him to forget his lines; the phobia persisted for five years. One of my own experiences also illustrates the way in which our fears can become self-fulfilling prophesies. I was acting in a
A Question of Ethics

Lisa had a deep fear of speaking in any position other than number three. At the end of the first class meeting, she privately informed her speech instructor that she had to speak in third position in every assignment. According to Lisa, she had never made a presentation in any other position to that point in her life. The instructor believed that the speech class was an opportunity for the young woman to confront an irrational fear that appeared to cause her great emotional distress. Since the class policy was to allow the students to volunteer for speaker positions, she told Lisa that she would have to open the question of speaking order to the entire group.

When another student requested the third speaking position, Lisa panicked. She firmly informed her classmate that she could not take that position. Believing the request to be unreasonable and reacting with some surprise to the authoritarian tone of the demand, her classmate took a staunch position and refused to change. Lisa was dismayed. Panic-stricken, she continued her efforts to persuade the other student to change speaker position until it was clear that the student would not yield. If you were the instructor in this class, how would you deal with this kind of situation—one where the student has extreme communication apprehensiveness or a panic disorder?

We feel greater anxiety in situations where we are conspicuous or in situations where we are totally ignored. One contributor to an Internet forum explained that he is fine sitting at a table with a group of twelve or more people. But if he begins to feel that he is on display, he panics. He said that he has dropped classes to avoid oral presentations, and he avoids social situations where he could become the center of attention. At the other extreme, we become uncomfortable in situations where we are ignored. We wonder why no one will look at us, and we search our minds for reasons to explain the lack of responsiveness. We become more anxious when we think that the audience is disinterested or unresponsive. Audiences do not realize to what extent speakers are aware of small movements, fleeting expressions, yawns, and exits from auditoriums.

We experience greater apprehension when speaking to individuals or groups of higher status than ourselves. These feelings of apprehension often translate into more rigid and tense postures, which typify low-status individuals. Once we have transmitted signals of insecurity and lack of confidence to audience members, we have a harder time gaining their respect and attention.
Psychologists differentiate between anxiety associated with particular personality traits (trait anxiety) and tension generated by specific situations (situational anxiety). While someone with trait anxiety will experience high levels of anxiety in many different communication environments, a person with situational anxiety will feel tense only in certain situations—public speaking, for example, or job interviews.

Situational anxiety afflicts virtually everyone at some point, including celebrities. When sitcom star Jennifer Aniston won the October 2002 Hollywood Film Award for her starring role in *Friends*, her acceptance speech was less than memorable. Afterwards Aniston explained, “I understand the whole crying thing now. I forgot the cast! I’m just terrified. I have stage fright unless I have something written for me to say. I couldn’t speak. I’m a blithering idiot.” One of the most humorous accounts of stage fright comes from the experience of British actor Alfred Edward Matthews, who performed in a West End London production. A pivotal scene required that he answer a telephone on stage. When the telephone rang on cue, Matthews crossed the stage, picked up the receiver, and froze. Realizing that he had forgotten his line, he turned to another actor and said, “It’s for you.”

Lacking the option of such a creative exit from the situation, speakers with stage fright seek other ways to deal with their anxieties. Following the advice of professionals, they may begin by assessing their level of comfort in speaking situations. James C. McCroskey designed the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) to measure more generalized communication anxiety (trait anxiety) and the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) to measure anxiety...
that is specific to public speaking (situational anxiety). McCroskey and his colleagues at West Virginia University have largely defined the study of communication apprehension since 1970. See the Measuring Up boxes on pages 39 and 41.

Public speaking ranks very close to the top of high anxiety-producing situations. A 1997 study found that 20 percent of public speaking students experience anxiety of a severe nature, and a 2001 Gallup poll found that fear of public speaking ranked second only to fear of snakes among the general population. Earlier polls have generated similar findings, with fear of death occupying a significantly lower ranking than public speaking. Referring to these results, comedian and television actor Jerry Seinfeld once joked, “Now this means, to the average person, if you have to go to a funeral, you’re better off in the casket than doing the eulogy!”

Some speakers experience the kind of panic described by Katzman, where they have difficulty breathing or continuing. When delivering a speech, one student would bring her child to the front of the classroom with her so that, if she succumbed to panic, the child could lead her from the room. Research suggests that panic disorders of this variety tend to occur more than twice as often in women as men (4.9 percent of women as opposed to 1.2 percent of men). Studies also show that women experience higher levels of communication anxiety, in general, than men. The problem of succumbing to irrational fears is not restricted to inexperienced speakers. Surveys suggest that 76 percent of experienced speakers feel anxious prior to reaching the podium. (See the Reflections box.)

We can look at signs of speech anxiety in terms of what we would feel, what others would see and hear, and what mechanical devices (connected to the body) would register.

- **As a speaker, we would feel** tightness in the throat and a dry mouth, frequent swallowing, weak knees, shortness of breath, cold hands, faintness, sinking feeling in stomach, inability to focus, a sense of confusion and disorganization, and blankness of mind or blockages of memory. We might have difficulty sleeping during the period leading to the presentation.
- **Others would see** the avoidance of eye contact, licking of lips, flushed face, awkward posture and unnatural movements, restless pacing, aimless gesturing, fidgeting with objects, and shaking hands.
- **Others would hear** an abnormally fast or slow rate of speech, weaker voice, higher pitched voice, breaking or quivering voice, blurred or unclear speech, more slips of the tongue, nonfluencies such “um” and “uh,” and lack of vocal variety.
- **Mechanical devices, attached to the body, would detect** increased perspiration, dilation of pupils, faster pulse rate, higher blood pressure, increase in blood sugar, increased glandular secretions, reduced digestive processes due to diversion of blood from the stomach and intestines to the brain and muscles, and irregular breathing.
Measuring Up

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)

The PRCA-24 is the instrument which is most widely used to measure communication apprehension. It is preferable above all earlier versions of the instrument (PRCA, PRCA10, PRCA-24B, etc.). It is highly reliable (alpha regularly > .90) and has very high predictive validity. It permits one to obtain subscores on the contexts of public speaking, dyadic interaction, small groups, and large groups. However, these scores are substantially less reliable than the total PRCA-24 scores because of the reduced number of items. People interested only in public speaking anxiety should consider using the PRPSA rather than the public speaking subscore drawn from the PRCA-24. It is much more reliable for this purpose.

This instrument is composed of twenty-four statements concerning feelings about communicating with others. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you: Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Are Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5

1. I dislike participating in group discussions.
2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.
3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.
4. I like to get involved in group discussions.
5. Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.
6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.
7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.
8. Usually, I am comfortable when I have to participate in a meeting.
9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.
10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.
11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.
13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.
15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.
16. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.
17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
18. I’m afraid to speak up in conversations.
19. I have no fear of giving a speech.

(Continued)
Measuring Up

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)—cont’d

20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

Scoring
Group Discussion: 18 – (scores for items 2, 4, & 6) + (scores for items 1, 3, & 5)
Meetings: 18 – (scores for items 8, 9, & 12) + (scores for items 7, 10, & 11)
Interpersonal: 18 – (scores for items 14, 16, & 17) + (scores for items 13, 15, & 18)
Public Speaking: 18 – (scores for items 19, 21, & 23) + (scores for items 20, 22, & 24)

Group Discussion Score: _____
Meetings Score: _____
Interpersonal Score: _____
Public Speaking Score: _____

To obtain your total score for the PRCA, simply add your sub-scores together. _____ Scores can range
from 24–120. Scores below 51 represent people who have very low CA. Scores between 51–80 represent
people with average CA. Scores above 80 represent people who have high levels of trait CA.

Norms for the PRCA-24
Based on over 40,000 college students; data from over 3,000 nonstudent adults in a national sample
provided virtually identical norms, within 0.20 for all scores.

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more recent editions of this book, now published by Allyn & Bacon.
Measuring Up

Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)

This was the first scale we developed in our work on communication apprehension. It is highly reliable (alpha estimates > .90) but it focuses strictly on public speaking anxiety. Hence, we moved on to develop the PRCA and ultimately the PRCA-24.

This is an excellent measure for research which centers on public speaking anxiety, but is an inadequate measure of the broader communication apprehension construct.

Directions: Below are thirty-four statements that people sometimes make about themselves. Please indicate whether or not you believe each statement applies to you by marking whether you:

Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Are Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5.

1. While preparing for giving a speech, I feel tense and nervous.
2. I feel tense when I see the words “speech” and “public speech” on a course outline when studying.
3. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
4. Right after giving a speech I feel that I have had a pleasant experience.
5. I get anxious when I think about a speech coming up.
6. I have no fear of giving a speech.
7. Although I am nervous just before starting a speech, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable.
8. I look forward to giving a speech.
9. When the instructor announces a speaking assignment in class, I can feel myself getting tense.
10. My hands tremble when I am giving a speech.
11. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
12. I enjoy preparing for a speech.
13. I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say.
14. I get anxious if someone asks me something about my topic that I don’t know.
15. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
16. I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while giving a speech.
17. My mind is clear when giving a speech.
18. I do not dread giving a speech.
19. I perspire just before starting a speech.

(Continued)
Measuring Up

Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)—cont’d

____ 20. My heart beats very fast just as I start a speech.
____ 21. I experience considerable anxiety while sitting in the room just before my speech starts.
____ 22. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
____ 23. Realizing that only a little time remains in a speech makes me very tense and anxious.
____ 24. While giving a speech, I know I can control my feelings of tension and stress.
____ 25. I breathe faster just before starting a speech.
____ 26. I feel comfortable and relaxed in the hour or so just before giving a speech.
____ 27. I do poorer on speeches because I am anxious.
____ 28. I feel anxious when the teacher announces the date of a speaking assignment.
____ 29. When I make a mistake while giving a speech, I find it hard to concentrate on the parts that follow.
____ 30. During an important speech I experience a feeling of helplessness building up inside me.
____ 31. I have trouble falling asleep the night before a speech.
____ 32. My heart beats very fast while I present a speech.
____ 33. I feel anxious while waiting to give my speech.
____ 34. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

Scoring

To determine your score on the PRPSA, complete the following steps:

Step 1. Add scores for items 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, & 34.
Step 2. Add the scores for items 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, & 26.
Step 3. Complete the following formula: PRPSA = 72 – Total from Step 2 + Total from Step 1

Your score should be between 34 and 170. If your score is below 34 or above 170, you have made a mistake in computing the score.

High = > 131
Low = < 98
Moderate = 98–131
Mean = 114.6; SD = 17.2

At the age of fifty-five, I had been speaking and performing in public situations for forty years. While in school, I had participated actively in competitive debate, interpretive reading, extemporaneous and impromptu speaking, oratory events, and theater productions. My professional career had involved teaching speech, theater, and a broad range of communication courses; and I had been involved in community theatre, as well. I assumed that I would never again experience speech anxiety. I thought that the shaky hands, the weak knees, and the trembling voice were vestiges of a long abandoned youth. But I was wrong! I learned that, at any point in our lives, we can become a casualty of speech anxiety.

On the occasion in question, I had been asked to speak to a group of program evaluation experts on approaches to evaluating communication programs, a little researched topic at that time. The audience was large, and I believed that they knew a great deal more about the topic of program evaluation than I knew. Although I was one of a slate of speakers, I was the sole representative from the communication community. So I was already a bit nervous about my competency to speak to this particular group (first cause of anxiety—fearing that others know more than you know). The group was also unfamiliar to me, since they came from another discipline; and the auditorium was filled to capacity (second cause of anxiety—large and unfamiliar audience). Moreover, I was in a hectic work period and I had had little time to prepare for the speaking occasion. The lack of preparation time made me still more nervous (third cause of anxiety—lack of preparedness). That nervousness escalated to panic when I arrived at the auditorium, fifteen minutes before the opening speaker, to find that the overhead projector had been positioned at least ten feet from the speaker’s podium (fourth cause of anxiety—last-minute arrival and lack of time to adjust to physical environment).

To make matters worse, the podium and equipment were on two different levels! Because I had planned to use both a manuscript and visuals, I did not know what to do. Too late to ask for changes in the physical setting and too flustered to ask someone else to assist with the visuals, I assumed the role of roadrunner. I dashed from one level to the next as I delivered my speech to a room filled with hundreds of people. I was breathless and exhausted from the tension and unexpected high level of physical exertion. My knees and hands shook uncontrollably, and even while I was speaking, I worried that the negative experience would permanently undermine my self-confidence in speaking situations.

In fact, it did take a few months and several speaking events to recover the sense of security that I had felt prior to this calamitous presentation. On a subsequent speaking occasion, for example, I was in a small conference room with a group of six academics, and I experienced the same high level of anxiety that I had felt with the audience of hundreds. Had I stopped speaking at that point in time, I might have been an anxious presenter for the rest of my career. I chose, however, a different route. And for many people, that decision as to whether to withdraw from public speaking or to face another audience is key to overcoming speech anxiety. If you stop speaking at a point when you have had a bad experience, you will never have a good experience.

Sherry Ferguson
Coping Strategies

Like other successful performers, speakers have to learn to channel nervousness to their benefit. Anxiety generates energy, which seasoned performers harness and use to their advantage. News anchor Walter Cronkite once joked that the difference between a professional and a novice is that the professional has taught his butterflies to fly in formation. Studies demonstrate that students typically report much lower levels of speech anxiety by the end of a public speaking course. As competency increases, levels of anxiety decrease. Even by the end of the fourth speech, students experience significantly reduced levels of anxiety. Suggestions for coping with speech anxiety include the following.

BEFORE THE SPEECH

Select a subject with which you are comfortable. One student chose to give his demonstration speech on how to polish shoes. Afterward he confessed that his own lack of interest in the topic and the fear of boring his audience caused him to feel extremely nervous. Another student delivered a speech on how to do an Axel, a standard jump in figure skating. Since only a few students had been involved in competitive figure skating, the technical details were tedious and hard for most to understand. At the other end of the spectrum, the figure skaters in the group already knew the material, and the speech rehashed old ideas. A recognition of the situation generated anxiety in the speaker, which could have been avoided by choosing a different topic.

Prepare thoroughly in advance of the speech occasion. Speakers do not always realize the critical role of preparation in feeling comfortable before an audience. If you are concerned about filling the time, forgetting your speech, or not knowing the answer to questions, you are more likely to be nervous. If you are worried that the audience may know more than you about the subject, you need to exert still more effort to feel comfortable with your topic. On the other hand, if you have

Keep in Mind

Coping: Before the Speech

- Choose a topic with which you are comfortable.
- Prepare thoroughly.
- Concentrate on your introduction and conclusion.
- Find out who will be present at the speech.
- Practice delivering and timing your speech.
- When practicing, don’t stop until you’ve reached the end of the speech.
- Familiarize yourself with equipment and the physical setting for the speech.
- Use visualization techniques to imagine an ideal presentation.
- Get enough sleep the night before the speech event.
invested time in your topic, your audience should be able to recognize and respect the effort.

Concentrate in particular on your introduction and conclusion, which you may choose to memorize. Research demonstrates that speaker anxiety diminishes considerably after the first thirty seconds of a presentation. Moreover, first impressions do count.

**Do not try to memorize the entire speech.** Prepare notes from which you can speak. You are less likely to lose your place, and you will sound more spontaneous.

**Find out who will be present at the speech.** The unfamiliar is unnerving. If you have researched and adapted your speech to your audience, you will feel less nervous delivering the speech. If you face a hostile audience, you need to devise strategies for reaching the group. If you know that you are speaking to experts, you should gear your language and presentation style to that level.

**Practice delivering and timing your speech so that you do not exceed time limits.** Realizing that you are significantly over your time limit can cause you to become anxious and flustered. You may rush to complete the speech and, in the process, leave out important sections that cause the speech to seem disorganized and disjointed. You also risk losing focus and forgetting parts of the speech.

**When practicing, do not stop until you have reached the end of the speech—even if you forget part of the speech.** Learning how to overcome moments of failed memory or to cope with mistakes is part of the process of becoming an accomplished speaker. Do not expect every session to be the same. With extemporaneous speaking, your words will vary somewhat with each practice. (See Tips from a Professional.)

**Familiarize yourself with the equipment and physical arrangements of the setting in which you will speak.** If you have planned to deliver your speech to a small intimate

### TIPS FROM A PROFESSIONAL

Regardless of natural talent and ability, anyone can become a great speaker by following five key rules.

**Tell a story, make a point.** Everyone loves a good story. Think about it. At church, school, or when hanging out with friends, a good storyteller would always catch your attention. The same holds true when giving speeches.

Recently I gave a speech titled “Uncomfortable.” The speech was about how personal growth requires us to become uncomfortable. In support of my thesis, I told a story about my fear of flying—white knuckles, sweating, praying on the flight, and taking medication to cope with my fears. In other words, to get from one point to another, we sometimes have to do things that make us uncomfortable.

My second story was about the discomfort that I felt selling encyclopedias door to door one summer in between college semesters. Selling door to door was very uncomfortable; however, it helped me become a great salesperson and taught me about persistence. Your listeners need visuals—words that paint images—something to “hold on to” when they are listening. Tell a story . . . visuals, humor, drama . . . and make a point.

(Continued)
group and you find yourself in an auditorium setting, you may lose your confidence. Similarly, some speakers lose their confidence when lecterns are removed. Be sure that you have tested the equipment and identified problems in advance of the speaking event. Also be certain that the room will hold the same equipment and the same seating arrangement on the day that you are to present. If you suspect that you will have to rearrange furniture, plan to come early or to request necessary changes.

Use visualization techniques to imagine an ideal presentation. Speakers who train and practice visualization techniques report decreased levels of communication apprehension.

**Provide a road map.** Tell 'em what you are going to tell 'em, tell 'em, and tell 'em what you told them. That’s it. That’s a road map. In the role of guide, you have to provide directions for where you will be taking your listeners so they don’t get lost. Always present the central theme of your speech in the first thirty seconds so they don’t begin thinking, “Where is he going with this?” Then tell them the two, three, or four points you are going to discuss (tell 'em what you going to tell 'em) and then discuss the points (tell 'em). In your conclusion, repeat the points and the theme of your speech (tell 'em what you told 'em). It’s easy for listeners to get distracted with thousands of things on their minds. Constantly remind them where they are, where they are going, and where they have been. A good speaker provides a great road map.

**Be enthusiastic.** Ever hear a speaker who put you to sleep? No excitement, no energy, no enthusiasm? One of my best mentors was Arlo Pierson, my boss the summer I sold encyclopedias door to door. He was a captivating speaker. Why? He smiled, used wild gestures, and made great eye contact. He always talked as if he was sharing the most important news in the world. People loved him because he was so enthusiastic. Audiences love speakers with passion and enthusiasm.

**What’s in it for me?** Another mentor taught me that, when I’m speaking, I should always remember that my audience is thinking these words: So what? What’s in it for me? You have to address the needs of your audience. What are the benefits of your message? Will they make more money, have better sex, become wiser and richer, or lead a more meaningful life? How will they benefit from your message? Tell them how you will help them. Spell out what’s in it for them.

**Get enough stage time.** Darren Lacroix, the 2001 Toastmasters International World Champion of Public Speaking, began his speaking career as a stand-up comic in 1994. He was awful. Darren said that he would frequently “bomb” and get booed off the stage. However, year after year, he got back on stage, presented new material, and spoke as often as possible. Eventually he joined Toastmasters International in the late 1990s. His local memberships extended to five different Toastmasters clubs so he could speak frequently. Darren videotaped almost every speech and enlisted the help of other veteran Toastmasters to critique his work. The result of all his years of “stage time”? He beat more than 50,000 contestants to win the Toastmasters International 2001 World Championship of Public Speaking. He says he went from “chump to champ” because of all his stage time. Great speakers jump at every speaking opportunity.
anxiety and improved performance. The most convincing evidence of the benefits of visualization comes, however, from the athletic world. Some Olympians say that it accounts for 90 percent of their success because the time that separates winners from losers is often seconds. According to Olympic competitor Curt Clausen, “The difference between you and the guy next to you is almost completely mental. At the highest level, that’s what makes the difference.” In the period preceding the 2000 Olympic trials, diver Laura Wilkinson broke three bones in her right foot, an injury that kept her from practicing some required dives for seven weeks. During her period of recuperation, she used mental imagery to sustain her skills; in Sydney, Australia, she broke China’s sixteen-year dominance to capture the gold medal in women’s platform diving.

With visualization, you create or re-create an event in your mind, using all of your senses to imagine the experience. Visualization helps to make unfamiliar situations more familiar. You anticipate the details of the moment when you will stand before the audience, so that the actual event appears like a rerun of what you imagined as a perfect performance. The perspective from which you visualize the event can be either internal or external.

With the internal perspective, you are completely “in the body”—seeing, feeling, and experiencing the event from the perspective of the participant. Being “in the body” limits your vision to what you would see as a participant in the event. If you
are up to bat on the baseball field, for example, you would see the pitcher and the people on the field, but you would not see the back of their heads, the umpire, the catcher, or the players sitting on the bench. Laurie Graham, winner of five World Cup races in alpine skiing, describes how she takes an internal perspective in her imaging:

All of us use visualization a lot in our sport. You have to know the course one hundred percent; all the bumps, which way the turns go, what the terrain is like, what the snow is like, the optimum line you want to be on, and the optimum position. All that goes in and we watch ourselves in our minds run the course and run it well. If we make a mistake in our mind we rewind, go back and just see ourselves doing it right, from start to finish. Actually I don’t watch myself, I visualize it as if I’m running the race; the course is coming at me. There are different ways to visualize. You can go through the course just skiing the gates, so you know where the gates are. But then you have to ski through the course fast, feeling the way you want to ski.43

In the case of public speaking, internal imaging involves seeing, hearing, and feeling the sensations from the perspective of the speaker. With an external perspective, on the other hand, you are “out of the body.” You have become a spectator at the event, a member of the audience. In the case of public speaking, external imaging involves witnessing the event from the perspective of an audience member. The position of observer enables you to see things that you might not perceive from inside the body, and you have less of an emotional connection to the event. You might see yourself standing before the audience—confident and erect in posture, smiling, making eye contact with different audience members, using natural easy gestures, and receiving applause as you finish your speech. Whereas the internal perspective emphasizes the kinesthetic, the external perspective stresses the visual. The following visualization by Olympic diver Sylvie Bernier illustrates the process of visualization from an external perspective:

At night, before going to sleep, I always did my dives. Ten dives. I started with a front dive, the first one I had to do at the Olympics, and I did everything as if I was actually there. I saw myself on the board with the same bathing suit. Everything was the same. . . . If the dive was wrong, I went back and started all over again. It takes a good hour to do perfect imagery of all my dives, but for me it was better than a workout. Sometimes I would take the weekend off and do imagery five times a day.44

Both perspectives are important. Gaetan Boucher, double gold medalist in speed skating at the 1984 Olympics, described how he moved between internal and external perspectives in imaging:

I always do the same thing. When I go from the warm-up bench to the starting line, I go to the same spot, flex a couple of times, make the hole for my blades where I start, get in position and picture the way I will skate. I try to get inside myself, instead of having a video view. The video view is more visual. You see yourself. If I am inside myself, it is really me that is skating and I do not see myself going around the corner like a video. I am trying to picture from the inside but sometimes I cannot. I usually see myself start the race from the back and then it is like I get closer and follow right behind. Then I see the turn from the side. But then I move back inside myself and I come around the turn, seeing the turn coming. Then I see the same corner from the front.45
Suggestions for how to practice visualization vary among different sports psychologists. The following, however, embodies the principles included in most instructions. To prepare for visualization, write a description of what you want to imagine—that is, your “perfect performance,” including as many details as possible. Visualization should involve all of the senses. Imagine the sound of the fan, the brightness of the lighting, the smell of lilacs outside the window, the sound of papers rustling while you wait for students to put away their notebooks, the smiles on faces of friends, and other details about the speaking environment. Sometimes speakers or others record this description on an audiotape that they can replay. A gifted NCAA basketball player, for example, recorded his visualization of scoring a basket. In his description, he included hearing the “swoosh” of the ball as it enters the net. He played the audiotape each evening before he went to sleep and when he awoke in the mornings. Others watch videotapes of performers they would like to emulate.

Before beginning the first visualization exercise, read through the written script or listen to the audiotape. Then prepare for the mental imagery by doing a relaxation exercise. After relaxing, imagine a simple experience, such as going to the
front of the classroom to speak. *Assume an internal perspective in the beginning, relying on all of your senses to experience the moment from a physiological and emotional perspective. If you experience the sensation of fear or you feel your body tensing in anticipation of speaking, engage in self-talk and use trigger words to quiet your negative emotions. Practice shutting out distracting or negative thoughts and focusing on the speech and the audience. After you have attempted this exercise a few times, include an external perspective. Imagine your perfect performance from the perspective of the audience. Visualize the moment when you rise from your seat to go to the front of the classroom. Place an emphasis on the visual and auditory elements of the speaking environment. What will observers see and hear? If you see yourself experiencing some problem, visualize yourself recovering from the situation with grace and confidence. Ten minutes of practice each day can make a significant difference to performance.*

*Finally, get enough sleep the night before the speech event. A late night can compromise your ability to think clearly on the day of your speech event.*

**DURING THE SPEECH**

*Dress appropriately and comfortably.* Avoid question marks when you choose outfits for a speaking event. You want to be able to concentrate on your speech, not to worry about whether you are dressed appropriately. If you think that a skirt might be too short or a tie too loud, return them to the closet. If you think that you will feel shaky in a pair of high heels, make a different choice. If you are worried that an outfit could emphasize an attribute that you would rather not share with your

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**Keep in Mind**

**Coping: During the Speech**

- Dress comfortably—but appropriately.
- Be on time to deliver the speech.
- While waiting, tense and relax your hand, leg, and other muscles.
- Before beginning, take a couple of deep breaths.
- Concentrate on what you are saying instead of how you are saying it.
- Concentrate on the audience instead of yourself.
- Deliver the speech with outward signs of confidence.
- Do not verbalize your anxiety.
- If your mouth becomes dry, pause and take a swallow of water.
- Recognize that even the best speakers make mistakes.
- Use visual aids, which shift attention from speaker to speech and give meaningful actions to your hands.
- Substitute larger controlled movements for fidgety uncontrolled ones.
- Shift into positive self-talk if you feel lack of confidence.
- Recognize that seemingly negative responses from the audience may have nothing to do with you.
- If you panic, get past the moment.
audience, select another item. Choose clothing that allows freedom of movement. You want to feel comfortable when you speak. If you are unsure about the expectations of the audience or the occasion, err on the conservative side. Prescriptions are difficult, but you should always try to look your personal best. Much communication anxiety derives from factors related to physical appearance.

Be on time to deliver the speech. If you are racing to get to the event, you will be emotionally fatigued, flustered, and breathless before you begin your speech. In an April 2005 episode of The Apprentice, Donald Trump eliminated candidate Angie from the competition after she choked on a presentation. Angie attributed her poor presentation to the tension that she felt after being stuck in New York traffic, unable to arrive at her destination until the last minute, and to an unexpected glitch in her presentation (loss of a jacket to be worn by a fashion model).

While waiting to speak, take measures to relax your body and voice. First, tense and relax your hand, leg, and other muscles. Such actions help to rid your body of excess tension created by the rush of adrenaline. Then take a couple of deep breaths. The most visible signs of nervousness are a fast-paced delivery, accompanied by breathlessness; a higher pitched voice that is thin rather than full in tone; a failure to pause for emphasis; and garbled and inarticulate speech. Anxiety restricts the chest and throat muscles. A deep breath, on the other hand, will open the airway and send oxygen to your lungs and brain. Sitting straight against the back of your chair, hold your breath for four to five seconds before slowly exhaling. If you can find a private corner, you might also want to do some facial exercises designed to loosen facial and jaw muscles. One such exercise requires you to open your mouth wide and then close tightly. Just as athletes use visualization to prepare for events, they also use visualization to relax prior to an event. Race-walker Andrew Hermann says that he imagines a smooth blue liquid running through his body. If that does not work, he proceeds to a second image: “I picture brown sugar and pouring water over it. I see it dissolve and it makes the tensions dissolve wherever they are.” Speakers can use these same strategies.

When delivering the speech, concentrate on what you are saying instead of how you are saying it; eliminate distractions. If you focus on the ideas in your speech, you will have less time to worry about your shortcomings. Sports psychologists use the term peak performance to describe times when athletes are at their personal best. Sports psychologist Peter Jensen says that athletes who have experienced a peak performance describe it in the following way:

You’re focused and relaxed—athletes always say it’s as if things are happening in slow motion. They see everything, they anticipate, and yet the time went by very quickly. And that kind of duality . . . where at the end, it changes to, “Gee, I just got out here, I would have liked to stay out here longer—and yet while I was out there, everything was so slow. I could see everything, I had time for everything, I didn’t feel rushed.”

Some athletes describe their peak performances as “out-of-body” experiences. Others describe the experience as “being in a cocoon,” totally detached from distractions in the environment. Many describe peak performances as being “in the flow,” where the person has a feeling of absolute control, confidence, and absorption in the happening. Golfers talk about being “in the zone.” U.S. Olympic Training Center sports psychologist James Bauman said that numerous studies have
confirmed that successful athletes have a higher-than-average capacity to deal with distractions:

Olympic athletes in particular find ways to remain focused on an event to the exclusion of negative influences such as unruly crowds, inclement weather, even family problems. While the vast majority of us spend lots of time worrying about things we can’t control, successful athletes attend primarily to those cues or stimuli that are relevant, or within their control.51

Experts say that the focus must always be on the activity being performed. Focusing on someone else’s performance just serves to distract.

While speaking, concentrate on the audience instead of yourself. (See the Reflections box.) Look for signals of understanding. If you see your audience drifting or looking uncertain, insert an attention-getting device, ask a question, or find an alternate way to explain an idea that may have generated confusion. Try not to respond to signs of disinterest by drawing into yourself. Maintain direct eye contact with your audience and focus on friendly faces if you feel that your confidence is waning. Once you have received positive reinforcement from those audience members, you can try again with those who appear bored or negative.

Deliver the speech with outward signs of confidence and do not verbalize your anxiety. Studies in nonverbal communication have demonstrated that psychologists can experience the feelings of patients by assuming the postures of the patients. If you assume more confident postures, your audience also will feel more comfortable. If you perceive your status to be lower or your assets less than that of your audience, remember that you may be superior in some other domain. The theory of multiple intelligences, discussed in Chapter Thirteen, focuses on our multidimensionality as human beings. So while I may be better at writing or speaking, you may better at art or music. Judge yourself as a whole person in moments when you feel insecure—a person with as much value and as many abilities as anyone sitting in the audience.

If you feel your mouth becoming dry during your presentation, take the time to pause and take a swallow of water. Bring a bottle of water with you to the speaker’s stand.

Recognize that even the best speakers make mistakes; regain your focus and continue if you make a mistake. No one is perfect. Much of the time, your audience will not

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**Reflections**

Rae Tattenbaum, a certified instructor in biofeedback, told the story of a talented mezzo-soprano, who came to her for help with concentrating during performances. The young woman explained that she always noticed the tightness of her pantyhose when she was singing, and when that happened, she lost focus: “My pantyhose,” she told me. “That’s what I think about when I’m performing.”

Famed golf champion Tiger Woods talked about the importance of regaining focus after you make a mistake: “My father and I call it zoning. If you mis-hit a shot, hit it out of bounds, put it in the water, you have to get your focus back. You’ve got to start thinking ahead, don’t look behind.” In your practice sessions, plan how to improvise if you get off track. Prepare note cards even if you think that you will not need them. You can put them in a pocket or on a nearby table—just in case.

Use visual aids, which shift attention from speaker to speech and give meaningful actions to your hands. Beginning speakers often feel as if they have gained three or four extra appendages. Visual aids offer an activity for your hands and give you a purpose for moving around as you point to, explain, and change your visuals.

If you become aware that you are making uncontrolled and fidgety movements, substitute larger controlled movements that add instead of detract from your speech. Fidgeting sometimes reflects a need to express oneself more naturally and openly. You should always use a presentation mode that seems comfortable to you.

If you begin to doubt the effectiveness of your presentation, shift into positive self-talk (before and during the presentation). Just as listeners have time to think about other topics while they are listening, you have time to take mental side trips while delivering a speech. With this excess time, you may begin to worry that your audience looks bored, inattentive, lethargic, or hostile. When confronted with self-doubts, engage in positive conversation with yourself. Say, for example, “OK, I’m doing pretty well. Most people look interested.” Or, “This next section should be easy to explain.” Or, “I think this next example will get the audience’s attention.”

Many Olympic competitors carry on conversations with themselves throughout their competitive events. U.S. runner Curt Clausen used cue words such as “relax, smile, low arms.” The internal dialogue of U.S. kayaking champion Kathy Ann Colin was somewhat different: “Come on. Just do it. . . . Ten strokes for power. Ten for rhythm. Ten for legs.” Sometimes in competitions, she blurted out, “Legs, legs, legs!” Others might use trigger words such as “smooth and easy,” “let it happen,” or “focus.” A 1992 study of Olympic gymnasts confirmed that the more positive the self-talk, the higher the chances that an athlete will excel, whereas negative self-talk has the opposite effect on an athlete’s success. A 1994 study found that junior tennis players who used self-talk won more points than players who did not.

Recognize that audience members have many different issues and preoccupations and that their reactions to your speech may have absolutely nothing to do with you. When I first began teaching, I interpreted lack of student attention or knitted brows as a personal criticism. I thought that I must be doing something wrong when students looked preoccupied or angry or frustrated—that my lecture was boring, that I had made some statement that offended, or that the students disliked me as an individual. But then I began teaching the first-year course in interpersonal communication, where I asked students to keep journals of their communication experiences. I learned a great deal from those journals, which were often emotional reading. At any given moment, the students were undergoing a vast range of experiences, which had to have an impact on their ability to listen and
to perform in the university classroom. I never went through a semester that some students did not lose close family members or friends to disease and accidents. A significant number underwent loss of relationships with boyfriends and girlfriends. Almost all expressed self-doubt and concern about being evaluated unfavorably by peers. One young woman had just learned that her partner had HIV, and she had to take a series of tests over six months to determine whether she had contracted the disease.

In short, I came to realize that nine times out of ten the student lost in her thoughts or frowning into her books was probably not thinking about my class. More often, she was thinking about a broken relationship, a hospitalized grandparent, or whether she had forgotten to put money in the parking meter. I came to realize that the sleepy-looking young man in the back row might be working double shifts to pay for next semester’s tuition. You should not ignore nonverbal signals from listeners. You should always try to capture and maintain the attention of all listeners. But you should not necessarily assume responsibility for failure. Many internal and external factors influence audience behaviors. What you see as a bored countenance may be the face of a student who studied or worked all night. What you interpret as negativity may be deep sadness or frustration, whose source has nothing to do with your speech. If your presentation is at 7:00 P.M., after your classmates have been in classes since 8:30 A.M., your efforts to hold their attention will not always be successful. Moreover, you should remember that, when people leave the classroom at the end of the period, they are more likely to be thinking about their problems than about your speech. So put matters into perspective—both as you speak and when you engage in self-evaluation after the fact.

Recognize that different cultures react in different ways to speakers. In a situation where approximately 150 million people live outside the countries of their birth, and two or three million more join them each year, audiences will be diverse. As speakers, we need to understand and appreciate the cultural differences in our audiences. If you are using eye contact as a measure of attentiveness, you might reach conclusions that are the opposite of the truth. Patterns of eye contact vary greatly between mainstream and some minority cultures. Americans of European heritage tend to look at a person while listening and away from the person while speaking. African Americans do the opposite, maintaining eye contact while speaking but not while listening. Studies of listening patterns in German and American students have identified other cultural differences, leading to the conclusion that we need to be careful when interpreting nonverbal responses of listeners.

If you freeze or panic, get past the moment. If a student says that he is unable to finish a speech, talk (as a group) about the situation. Class members can share their perceptions with the speaker, as well as the feelings that they have experienced at the podium. On occasion, I offer to alter the speaking environment in some way to help the person to overcome his fears. I usually allow the speaker to select an alternative arrangement, perhaps delivering the speech from a sitting position or even cross-legged on the floor with other students positioned in a circle. On one occasion, the speaker requested that the audience sit on the floor while he spoke from a standing position! Strange perhaps, but he was able to finish his speech; and the next time he spoke, he did not request any special seating arrangement. He had conquered his fear.
If you have not performed at your personal best, put the occasion into perspective by applying the “ten-year rule.” Ask yourself, “In ten years’ time, will this event be important?” In all likelihood, no one but you will remember the occasion after a year or two. More importantly, no one but you will really care. In fact, some studies suggest that audiences prefer speakers who are less than perfect.64 The following story offers a philosophical perspective from which to consider events of less than earth-shattering importance.

Charles never worried a great deal about what others thought about him—a source of some frustration to his family, since that lack of concern often translated into idiosyncratic dress and a disregard for conformity in general. When questioned on one occasion about why he placed so little importance on the views of other people, he said that his attitude had come from his days as a bomber pilot in World War II. At 17, he had joined Britain’s Royal Air Force (RAF), and subsequently he had flown many missions over Hitler’s Germany. War statistics reveal that no more than half of RAF pilots returned from their missions. While British commanders did not share these grim statistics with the pilots and moved the men frequently...
among locations to mask the high mortality rate, the pilots knew that, at the end of the day, many of their comrades did not rejoin them at Saracen’s Head—the Lincoln pub that was a gathering place for not only British, but also Canadian, American, and other Allied military. Faced with the need to come to terms with the fragility and uncertainty of life, Charles and many of his fellow officers had little time for the trivial and inconsequential. They had learned to differentiate between matters of life-altering importance and those of lesser import. For Charles, this experience had translated into a philosophy that governed how he chose to lead the rest of his life.

Doing well in a speech is important, but unless we are in the defendant’s box at a murder trial, few speeches are life-and-death matters. We should never allow this fear to dominate our professional and personal lives or discourage us from participating fully in life. Strive to do your best, but recognize that a less than perfect performance will not usually result in long-term damage to more than your ego or occasionally your wallet (in the case of a failed sale or business transaction). As sports psychologist Peter Jensen noted, “On a bad day, you might say, ‘I’ll just try this and then I’ll reevaluate myself and see where I’m at.’”

**Conclusion**

Although communicators with trait anxiety may make some progress in a supportive speech environment and should not dismiss the potential value of the experience, introductory speech classes are not the best place to learn coping techniques for severe problems. Social phobics such as Leslie, for example, require the help of counselors who specialize in treating severe social anxiety. The use of techniques such as desensitization, cognitive restructuring, hypnosis, biofeedback, group therapy, and skills training help the person to learn how to cope in social environments. Some psychologists believe in combining medications with these techniques. Obviously, introductory speech classes do not allow for these kinds of intensive therapeutic approaches to dealing with serious social phobias. Speech classes, on the other hand, are the perfect environment for giving people the skills to cope with situational anxiety; and they offer a more limited avenue to dealing with generalized anxieties.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Describe any physical or emotional symptoms that you experience when speaking before an audience. Have you ever panicked in these circumstances?
2. Review some of the causes of communication anxiety. Using this list of causes, analyze a situation in which you felt nervous.
3. How do you cope when you experience apprehensiveness associated with public speaking? Before the speech? During the speech? During the question period? Can you offer any advice to others?
4. When delivering a speech, what makes you most nervous? Fear of forgetting the speech? Lack of confidence in your knowledge or expertise? Audience reactions to your speech? Discomfort or issues with your dress? The physical environment? Equipment or technology problems? Difficulty in relating to different linguistic or cultural groups? Other?

5. Have you ever tried visualization as a means of controlling your apprehension? In what context? Preparing for a sports competition? A speaking competition? Other? Did you adopt an in-body or out-of-body approach to the visualization?

6. Describe your most successful and least successful speaking experiences. What were the characteristics of each situation?