# 6. How did I do?

#### Did people hear my message?

Whenever you give a presentation, it is natural to wonder how well it went. Did you say all the things that you wanted to say, did you remember to press the mouse at the right time to the right slide, did people laugh at the right times.

People will be coming to hear you speak because they want to learn something. So after you have:

* told people what you are going to say,
* said what you said you were going to say, and
* then told people what said you were going to say,

It is time to see if people have heard your message.

#### Ways to find out what people thought

There are a few ways to determine whether people have understood what you are talking about when you do a presentation on the NDIS.

It is important to ask for feedback so we can work out if our presentation has been effective in communicating what we are trying to say. Otherwise we will not know if we are achieving out objectives. Being open to feedback helps us be professional and responsible for our own actions and the effects of our actions on other people.

An important quality of being a professional presenter is having the desire to provide the best service we can and to keep on improving. Feedback and evaluation is a process by which we can look and see what we and others are doing and learn how to improve these activities, where necessary.

feedback via individual Notes

Some form of formal written feedback is usually the most effective way of getting honest feedback because it is private and anonymous. This might be by asking the audience to write down one thing that they remembered from the presentation.

This can be quite effective, but I remember one presentation I gave to police some years ago where they wrote down that I fell off the chair. Well it wasn’t quite what I wanted them to write down, so you need to be a bit specific!

You could ask “what is the one thing about the NDIS that you know now that you didn’t before”? or “how do you think the NDIS will improve your life / community”?

To do this you would need to have sticky notes or small pieces of note paper available to allow people to write their answers, which can then be collected for you to look at privately.

This activity would be useful when you have a large audience, as it wouldn’t require you to split up into groups and it would be easier to manage.

Feedback via group Notes

You could run an exercise where in small groups, people write down 5 things that they have learned about the NDIS and then collate the answers.

This would depend on the number of people at your presentation. It may not be practical if you have a large group, as it may involve a lot of seat shuffling and people moving and the setup of the room may not make it suitable, particularly if it is in theatre type set up where there are rows of chairs facing the speaker.

Formal evaluation sheets

Evaluation sheets are the most common form of formal feedback for workshops and presentations. They are good for collating a lot of consistent feedback into a way that can be reported. They are best when they are quick to fill in and have a mix of ‘ranking’ questions and some space for some individual thoughts and feedback.

This method is very effective for both large or small audiences, as you can have the evaluation sheets already to hand and you simply need to hand them out and then collect them at the end.

Activity

We are training people to become NDIS Champions over two days. There are lots of things to cover, and we want to make sure we’ve done a good job of making it all easy for people to understand and prepare.

In small groups compose a list of questions that could be used to evaluate our training.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

inFormal feedback

There are also a couple of informal ways that you can find out how well you did.

People come up to you and tell you how well you did. Some people are not used to hearing people with disabilities speak, in fact, most people are not used to hearing people with disabilities speak, so they well make mistakes. Try not to be offended when people say, “Oh, you are such an inspiration, you are so brave, etc”, but rather ask them what they liked about your talk.

We want people to know that we are just like everyone else, except better of course, so you will actually bring people along with you if you assume that they want to talk about the content.

Of course the biggest way of knowing that you did well is when someone comes up to you and asks you to speak at another event. It doesn’t happen all the time, as it depends on who is in the audience, and it doesn’t always come to anything. However, keep it as a compliment to be stored away when the suggestion is made.

#### Handling difficult issues

Difficult audience members

Sometimes some people just want to challenge you, although I think this will be rare, because people actually want to hear what you have to say.

However, it is better to know what to do if it does happen.

Remember that everyone has things happening in their lives, and sometimes your presentation may be held on a day that has bad memories, or they may have just got up on the wrong side of the bed. This isn’t your fault. You are not responsible, they are. Breathe.

Don’t go head to head with them, just remain detached. You will find that everyone else in the audience will be on your side.

If there is someone difficult, try saying something funny, like “well, that’s a new one on me” but don’t direct it at the person. Make out like you are cool calm and collected. Don’t give them ammunition by being angry.

If they want to keep the discussion going, just say, I’m sorry, but we must move along as we have so much to get through.

Just remember, it isn’t you, its them.

Handling difficult questions

Everyone gets a difficult question from time to time it might be that you don’t understand the question, or it might be that the question isn’t relevant, or it might be that the question is just too hard.

When this happens, the best thing to do is:

Buy some time. Take a sip of water so that you will have time to think, or actually take a couple of moments to consider the question.

Repeat the question and then ask “is that correct?” to make sure you actually do understand what they are asking.

If you have got it wrong, ask them to clarify by rewording the question.

If it is too hard, you could say, “wow that’s something I hadn’t thought of”. This shows that you are willing to learn from the audience. You could point them towards Disability Loop or the NDIS website.

If it isn’t about your talk, and it would be too much of a diversion, respond positively and suggest they have a quick chat afterwards if you feel comfortable with that, or suggest other talks they could attend.