

## PowerPoint Tips for Presentations and Trainings

Just as WIC has standards for and attempts to follow best practices for nutrition and breastfeeding support services, so does the training profession. Below are some tips to help with creating PowerPoint (PPT) presentations that align with adult learning principles and brain research. To learn even more, see the resources provided at the end of this document which provide much greater depth about the entire process of creation, presentation and evaluation of PowerPoint presentations.

First let's clarify the difference between a presentation and a training. A presentation involves giving information with maybe some small learning activities, whereas a training consists of giving information, allowing for the participants to apply that information during an activity, and evaluation of participants' knowledge and skills. This handout addresses both presentation and training skills with a focus on using PowerPoint.

We'll examine four components of a training to illustrate key concepts: the PowerPoint Slides, verbal presentation of material, interactive activities, and training handouts or handbook. When designing your training, each of these elements needs to be considered in relationship to each other.

### PowerPoint Slides

- Purpose of PowerPoint is to **reinforce your words**, not repeat them. People will read a PowerPoint slide much quicker than the amount of time you spend reading the words off of the slide. They will then tune out. Also, reading off the slides is monotonous and tiring for the trainer!
- **Use diagrams, images or links** to other media (i.e., video) in order to highlight critical ideas. Best practices are to **use text sparingly** and let the images tell the story; a single image can convey a mountain of meaning and a few words can reinforce a concept more than a list of ideas.
- Keep **slides simple** and uncluttered.
- Use **animation but do it wisely** when you really want the element of surprise or to make a key point.
- Generally, keep the overall PowerPoint **design consistent** but with an occasional change for novelty – use the same background color, type and graphic style with exceptions. For example, you might want to enlarge font to **emphasize** a word.
- For graphics, **clip art** is considered **passé** at this point. Microsoft Office is now offering more pictures that you can use. It is hard to get images – time consuming and that nasty copyright law but for a training that is ongoing it is especially worth the effort. If you do use clip art, as a general principle, don't mix it with realistic pictures.
- **Background colors** are important. **Light** background colors are good for a small venue. It has a brightness that helps in a longer training but can also add more

light to an already too bright room. **Dark** backgrounds work well in a larger room and for formal subjects.

- It is NOT recommended to make a PowerPoint handout from the slide presentation. As you plan your presentation decide in advance what the critical points are and put these in a **summary take – home document**. This will provide the participants with the information they need in a lot less pages. It will also be more coherent than notes scribbled rapidly. For trainings, there is usually a **handbook** given to participants.

## Verbal Presentation

- Use the “**Notes**” **page** of the PowerPoint presentation to record your notes. This can be printed out after you have finalized all your slides. If you don’t have a separate place for your notes you will create slides that are basically.... well, your notes! You don’t want people reading your notes; you want them to attend to your primary messages.
- Your **presentation has to be coordinated** with your slides, the interactive activities and of course, your presentation summary take – home handout or a training handbook.
- Humans are pretty smart but they do have a limit for information consumption. Delivering too much information is called “**cognitive overload**” and leads to little or no recall.
- Cognitive overload can be avoided or reduced by **chunking information**. This means that your presentation is divided into logical segments and you deliver only the key elements of the information.
- **Allow** for some **questions** during your presentation to keep people engaged; just keep a tight rope on tangents. Most people really do care if you get through the material you promised in a reasonably paced timeframe (i.e., no rushing at the end).

## Interactive Activities

- **Breaking up a lecture** style presentation with interactivity is essential. People learn best when they can apply learning. Adult learners want to see immediate results and want to make connections between the time they are spending in a presentation or training and benefits they are going to see in their work.
- Activities allow a **mental break** from the lecture and **encourage** different **cognitive skills** such as problem solving.
- Activities allow the **trainer a small break** from being on the spot. The trainer also gets to **evaluate** the learning of concepts as she observes the participants’ attempt to make application of the material.
- Activities should be **directly tied to the material** at hand, and be interactive and learner centered. **Interactive** = all people are engaged actively. **Learner centered** = material is relevant to learner; learner can make choices within the activity.
- Activities fall into these **configurations**: individual, pairs, small group, and large group. It is helpful in presentations to set up some small activities if time allows.

Most trainings should have a mix of these but especially in a long training. For example, a trainer might start a training with an **individual** activity in which people quietly write a reflection piece for five minutes. Then the trainer might have the individuals **pair** up with someone else and share their information. From that point the trainer might have the **whole group** do a brainstorm together with a mind map (diagram to make connections between ideas). This can all be done in just twenty minutes and everyone has been actively involved the entire time.

- See the *Wisconsin WIC Staff Development Toolkit* for ideas on how to develop a learner centered training.

## Training Handouts/Handbooks

- As mentioned above for presentations, if needed, do provide participants with a handout but let it be a **summary of key information**.
- For trainings, the handbook provided is ultimately a **reference guide** that will be used later in the line of duty. Consider during your planning phases what should be presented by you in the training and what, if anything can be given as “homework” later. Maybe not all the details in the handbook are absolutely critical; you can refer to it during the training. Presumably, people will have to apply everything in the handbook as they do their job.
- **Handbooks should have** a cover page, table of contents, page numbers, clear headings, and logical sequence of topics.
- The **design** of the handbook should be **readable** with significant white space; **interesting graphics** (diagrams to explain concepts, side bars for highlights) should be used.
- Remember to **write into your PowerPoint notes** when you want to refer to the handbook.

## Resources

*Wisconsin WIC Staff Development Toolkit* -  
<http://dhs.wi.gov/WIC/WICPRO/training/leadership.htm>

### Books

*Beyond Bullet Points* by Cliff Atkinson

*Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery* by Garr Reynolds

*Slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations* by Nancy Duarte

### Websites

Beyond Bullet Points - <http://www.beyondbulletpoints.com/>

Presentation Zen - <http://www.presentationzen.com/>  
Top Ten Tips for Better Visuals - Sample slides by Garr Reynolds -  
<http://www.garreynolds.com/Presentation/sample1.html>

Slide:ology - <http://blog.duarte.com/>

PowerPoint Templates (free)  
Free PPT Templates  
<http://www.freeppttemplates.com/freeppttemplates/freeppttemplates.html>

Free Images

Google Images (not necessarily free, have to check)  
<http://images.google.com/>

Google search link for free images  
[http://www.google.com/search?q=free+photos&rls=com.microsoft:\\*&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1](http://www.google.com/search?q=free+photos&rls=com.microsoft:*&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1)

freedigitalphotos.net  
[http://www.freedigitalphotos.net/images/gallery\\_Charts\\_and\\_Graphs\\_m197-sb\\_id-so\\_descending-page2.html](http://www.freedigitalphotos.net/images/gallery_Charts_and_Graphs_m197-sb_id-so_descending-page2.html)

Image Manipulation  
Apply an artistic effect to photos  
<http://officebeta.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/apply-an-artistic-effect-to-a-picture-HA010355163.aspx>

Advanced PowerPoint tutorial  
About.com: Presentation Software  
[http://presentationsoft.about.com/od/powerpointadvanced/a/macros\\_hub.htm](http://presentationsoft.about.com/od/powerpointadvanced/a/macros_hub.htm)