**Expectations of Volunteer Presenters**

**Setting up a Presentation**

Provide presenters with the forms and procedures for setting up a presentation. This includes the Program Presentation Form and the Volunteer Presenter Checklist (located in Forms section). Discuss the process of picking up participant materials and presentation equipment. If needed demo the equipment set-up.

**Documentation for each Education Program**

Volunteer Presenters are expected to submit the following to the chapter within one week of each presentation:

1. Completed sign-in sheet

2. CSQEI Evaluation forms

3. Completed Education Program Presentation Request Form with number of attendees, feedback, volunteer hours completed, etc.

Volunteer Presenters should know how to convey the importance of participants completing surveys and sign-in forms. Many people resist paperwork that seems unnecessary. Stress the importance of this information to the organization in order to continue to deliver and develop high quality programs. Also give them tips about how to quickly frame this information for participants so that they are willing to complete the forms.

**Techniques for Effective Presentations**

**Plan and prepare**

A key element of an effective presentation is good preparation. When you know that you are well prepared, you will be more relaxed and confident. You will be able to greet and converse with participants as they arrive. You will create a comfortable atmosphere and instill confidence in your audience. You can do this by:

* Allowing plenty of time to study the curricula and practice the presentation
* Assembling all needed materials well in advance
* Testing the presentation equipment ahead of time
* Arriving early to make sure the room is set up as planned and the equipment is working properly
* Using a checklist

If you feel anxiety before or during a presentation, know that this is normal. You can help minimize the impact of nervousness by:

* Doing deep breathing and stretching exercises
* Reducing or eliminating caffeine before you speak
* Drinking water or tea. Hot water or tea with honey is soothing for your vocal chords

**Voices of Experience:**

As a volunteer presenter, I’ve seen new presenters read to the audience. When I’m speaking, I’m not reading the script. I spend the time needed to prepare and absorb the content of the curriculum, so that I can get up and speak in a way that comes across naturally. It takes time, but it’s worth it.

**Room Set-up**

It is very helpful to plan in advance how your room will be set up. If possible, set up tables in a U-shape, so that participants can easily see you and each other. Another good option is to have table groups. The key is to have a comfortable setup for your audience and to consider the number of people who will attend. Make sure that all the equipment is working well in advance, that the temperature is comfortable, and that you can direct people to the restrooms. Set up program handouts, surveys and registration materials so that they are easily distributed to participants.

**Know your audience**

If possible, find out about your audience ahead of time. Who will be attending and what do they need? Although the curriculum remains the same, you will talk to a small group of Early Stage families differently than you might address a community group at a senior center. Feel free to poll your audience at the beginning of the presentation. Be aware of cultural differences and use culturally sensitive language.

Most people attend Association education programs due to a concern for themselves or someone they care about.

**Adult Learning Theory**

You can strengthen your presentations if you focus on the unique learning needs of adults and deliver every presentation with adult learning principles in mind. Your participants will include visual, auditory and experiential learners and everyone will retain information better if you employ all three. This is why the Association has developed curricula that include PowerPoint slides, videos, hand-outs and discussion questions. In addition, please be aware that adults learn better when:

* The learner’s experience is highly respected
* Audience participation is critical
* Information is practical and the application is clear
* The presentation delivery is interactive and engaging
* A variety of teaching techniques are used
* Visual aids are used carefully
* Interactive exercises and activities are key

**Connect with your Audience**

Your presentation will be more engaging if you adopt a conversational tone and periodically ask questions, rather than giving a didactic lecture. Be approachable and genuine. Humor can be helpful if used appropriately.

Pace your presentation appropriately. You can frustrate your audience by rushing or going too slowly. Keep your energy up and make sure that you articulate your words and speak loudly enough to be heard easily. Your voice should fill the room without yelling. If you will be speaking to a large group, make sure you have a microphone so that people do not miss what you are saying.

Be aware of the words you use. Use clear, everyday language that is easily understood by your audience. Don’t clutter your presentation with verbal fillers. Avoid jargon, slang, or highly technical words. If you need to use complex terms, be sure to explain them. Some tips for connecting with your audience are:

* Plan an engaging opening and closing. It can be a provocative question or funny story that introduces the topic, a parting quote, mission moment or call to action
* Speak from your diaphragm, not your throat
* When using a microphone, don’t shout. Speak naturally and aim your voice at the back row
* Smile and animate your face. Focus on communicating in a warm spontaneous tone
* Vary your tone and pace throughout your presentation
* Have fun!

**Handling questions**

Questions can add life to your presentation or take you off course, so it is crucial to handle questions well. Ask discussion questions to increase audience participation and check for understanding. When people ask questions, make sure you repeat the question before answering it, so that other participants understand what is being said. If you invite a question and no one answers immediately, wait a few seconds. You can break the ice by injecting one of your own, such as, “I’m often asked the latest Alzheimer’s research and when we might have disease-modifying treatments.…”

Helpful tips for handling questions include:

* Receive all questions politely. Make eye contact and keep your facial expression and body language open and engaged
* Use warm, introductory phrases, such as, “Thanks so much for your question.”
* Demonstrate empathy for the speaker’s viewpoint, “It’s clear this is a very challenging issue to deal with”
* Listen carefully and make sure you understand the question, asking for clarification if needed
* Don’t jump in too soon. Allow the person to fully ask their question
* Keep your answers brief and ask, “Does that answer your question?”
* If you don’t know the answer, thank the participant and let them know that you will get them the answer. (If appropriate, refer this to the chapter for follow up)
* If the question is the sort of thing that others in the group have probably experienced, take the opportunity to throw it to the group, “What about the rest of you? I imagine some of you have been in this situation. What worked for you?”
* Avoid passing judgment or publicly embarrassing a participant, even if their question demonstrates misinformation or is completely off topic. You can remain gracious and appreciative of their input, without agreeing with it
* Avoid allowing yourself to become annoyed, impatient, defensive or angry.
* Use a flipchart page labeled “Parking Lot” for items that are off-topic and can be addressed afterward
* Be prepared with some good responses to difficult questions and comments: o That’s not a position I’ve heard before. Perhaps we can discuss it after our session today
  + This is such an important issue. So that we can stay on track and end on time, could you and I discuss this on the break?
  + Let’s get some questions from those who have not yet had a chance to speak.
  + I’m not sure I see the connection with our topic. Could we save this for later?
  + Thanks for your feedback.
  + It sounds like things have been very difficult.
  + I’m so glad you asked that question, because it is just the kind of question that our 24-hour Helpline can answer at 800-272-3900. I’d be happy to have someone from the local office follow up with you this week
  + I want to get you the information you need, but I’m not sure I can do that within our time together today. May I have your permission to have someone from the local office follow up with you?