

How to Prepare OMOD Speakers for a Conference Presentation



Step 1: Schedule at least three (or more, if needed) two-hour prep sessions in the month prior to the conference. These prep sessions can be held via phone or webcam, but they are typically more successful when held in person with all speakers present. It is also advisable to schedule one prep session per week each week leading up to the week of the conference; this way, the sessions are close enough that the speakers will not forget material between each meeting but far enough apart that the speakers can successfully complete their assignments between each session. Share your proposed schedule with the speakers and revise to ensure all speakers can attend, if necessary.

Step 2: Before the first prep session, prepare a handout (examples included) with all the conference details, including future prep sessions and any travel, lodging, and meal information that may be required. Most important is the meeting time and location; this meeting may be at the actual conference an hour prior to your session, or it may be at an agreed departure time and location to meet for an out-of-town conference. Print a copy of this handout for each speaker and their parent(s), caregiver, or transportation provider, if appropriate.

Step 3: Manage time effectively during each session and follow up with the speakers between prep sessions to ensure they have what they need to successfully complete their assignments. Here are our recommendations for what to accomplish in each of the sessions:

Session 1. Distribute the handout with conference details. Answer any questions and resolve any logistical issues as best as you can, but try not to spend too much time on this. Then, depending on which format you have chosen, complete the following prep:

- ❖ Showcase style line-up of stories: Work with each speaker to identify which story they will present. Ask each speaker to practice reading their story out loud from across the room. Coach them on their performance and identify any edits that may enhance the story's meaning or help to better reach the specific conference attendees. Each speaker will be expected to incorporate these edits and practice their revised speech before the next prep session.

- ❖ Panel of speakers: Work as a group to generate a list of 10-15 questions that would be both helpful for the conference attendees and fairly easy for your speakers to answer. Once everyone has agreed on the list of questions, provide the list to the group (via email and paper copy) and ask that they prepare their answers during the next week and bring them to the next session.

- ❖ Workshop with interactive activities or a combination of stories and activities: Review each speaker's responsibilities during the workshop. Create a detailed timeline for your workshop, including the order of activities and the exact amount of time needed for each. Practice what you can in this first prep session and ask the participants to review and/or practice their role (e.g., facilitating an icebreaker activity, telling a story, etc.) in the workshop before the next session. If you have time, you may also want to discuss potential issues that may arise during your workshop, and brainstorm what to do in each scenario.
 - For example, if an activity you expected would take 30 minutes instead takes 10 minutes, you should have one or two extra activities set aside that you could do to fill the extra time.

Session 2. Finalize your presentation. If you are doing a line-up of solo speaker stories, ask each speaker to present their story again and coach them on their performance, using the same coaching strategies as in the six-week class. If you are doing a panel, practice asking each question and coach the speakers on their responses. If you are doing a workshop with activities, practice facilitating those activities and make adjustments as needed. Regardless of your session's format, time everything (each story, each panel question, each activity, etc.) to make sure your timeline is accurate and that your presentation will match the time allotted for it at the conference. If your presentation is too short or too long, you will need to cut or add some material to get it to the right time.

Session 3. Rehearse your conference presentation from start to finish without stopping. Time it to make sure it is the right length of time. Rehearse your presentation before a small test audience if possible and invite your test audience members to offer constructive feedback and ask the speakers questions to simulate audience questions, if your presentation includes an audience Q&A. Coworkers or other program speakers frequently make great test audience members. If you have time, do a second run-through of your presentation; if not, offer final coaching notes and ask your speakers to practice every day leading up to the conference. End the final prep session by reviewing the handout with the conference details and reiterated when and where to meet for the actual conference.

Sample Conference Prep Handouts

2014 Transition Conference Final Update

1. **Conference Date:** Thursday, February 27th, 2014
2. **Place:** Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol
3. **Address/Phone/Map:** Sheraton is at 701 E. 11th, Austin, TX
78701 Hotel phone: (512) 478-1111
4. **Parking:** Park in hotel parking garage. Pull a card when you go in. Exchange card for pre-paid parking card at Transition Conference Desk.
5. **OMOD Meet Up Time:** 4:30pm sharp
6. **OMOD Meet Place:** Hotel Lobby (3rd floor main entrance) Carol will have an OMOD sign.
7. **Actual Session Time:** 5:30-6:30pm
8. **Session Location:** 3rd Floor Capitol Ballroom A-C
9. **Remember:** Eat before you come. Bring snack.
10. **Depart Time:** 7pm

Any problems? Call: Eric at (---) --- ---- or Carol at (---) --- ----

Texas Advocates Conference 2015 Information

Practice Sessions

All practices are REQUIRED and held in:
Room 101 of the AGE Building
3710 Cedar Street
Austin, TX 78705

Practice Session 1

Thursday, July 9th, 1-3pm

Practice Session 2

Thursday, July 16th, 1-3pm

Practice Session 3

Thursday, July 23rd, 1-3pm

Departure/Return Information

Depart VSA Texas Office: Friday, July 24th at 1:30pm SHARP!

Day/Time of Presentation: Saturday, July 25th, 9:15-10:30am

Return to VSA Texas Office: Saturday, July 25th at 5pm

Hotel Information

Hotel: Hilton Anatole

Address: 2201 N Stemmons Freeway, Dallas, TX 75207

Phone: (214) 748-1200