

Managing Public Speaking Anxiety (UW-La Crosse Public Speaking Center)

- Anxiety and/or nervousness is normal for speakers, regardless of their experience level.
- It can occur at any point in the speech writing and delivery process.
- Some level of anxiety can be helpful – it can help motivate speakers.

Tips for managing anxiety

Speech writing process

- Create a list of steps of what needs to get done for your speech (topic selection, research, writing, etc.)
 - Use your assignment sheets as resources
 - Ask questions if expectations are unclear
- Start early because last minute work can increase anxiety
- Seek support – tutoring center, instructor, classmates
- Get feedback on work, it can build confidence and reassurances

Prior to speech day

- Practice speech with key word speaking outline and/or notes
- Practice introduction more than the rest of the speech, you'll be more nervous at the beginning of your speech
- Try to replicate the speaking situation in practice
 - In front of friends and family
 - In the classroom or a similar setting
- Write supportive notes on speaking outline
- Practice positive visualization
 - Imagine the entire speech process – walking to lectern, delivering the speech, returning to seat
 - Imagine yourself delivering the speech successfully

Speech day

- Get a good night's sleep
- Cut back or eliminate caffeine before speaking
- Practice visualization before you give the speech
- If you start to feel nervous, take deep breaths

During speech class

- If you sign up for speech order, try to go early
- Use positive visualization and deep breathing while waiting to speak

During your speech

- Keep a positive mindset during your speech
- Remember, every classmate is giving a speech too – they are also nervous!
- If you make a mistake during your speech – take a pause and then continue
- Don't apologize or dwell on mistakes, they are part of the speech process.