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.)
  o Use your assignment sheets as resources
  o 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
  o In front of friends and family
  o In the classroom or a similar setting
▪ Write supportive notes on speaking outline
▪ Practice positive visualization
  o Imagine the entire speech process – walking to lectern, delivering the speech, returning to seat
  o 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.