

TRAINERS' TRAINING PROGRAM BOOSTS PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

GOOD NEWS

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People often marvel at someone who effortlessly stands and delivers a seemingly flawless presentation or speech leaving their audience in awe for such a strong and positive impression.

While others feel at home owning the stage, others feel like they are standing atop a grilling pan. From drumming heartbeats to trembling knees to stammering, public speaking for others is much like a fear: a phobia.

The recently conducted Trainers' Training for Program Implementers of the National Conciliation and Mediation Board aimed to toughen the spines of the technical unit who are tasked to present and discuss the programs of the Board in front of an audience.

"We need implementers who are nothing less than good communicators," Executive Director Shirley M. Pascual said.

"Public speaking is a must-have skill for the technical unit," Deputy Executive Director for Technical Services Maria Teresita L. Cancio added. Cancio handled the training workshop on public speaking. "As Labor and Employment Officers, it is important to improve your communication and presentation skills, because communication is at the heart of your effectiveness."

Anxiety in public speaking – or the fear of it – is called

glossophobia. Scientific journals classify it as a social anxiety disorder or SAD. (*Don't worry, it isn't something that's medically dangerous.*)Magneticsspeaking.com presents a statistical information showing that six percent of males and 8 percent of females in America fear speaking in front of an audience. Together makes about seven percent of USA's population [which is close to 30 million].

"To stand in public is a tall order for me," Domingo [not his real name], one of the trainees, said. "My knees seem to buckle due to nervousness and lots of apprehension." Domingo and the others who feel the same crumble under the pressure of the presumably critical eyes of the audience. Add to that the many "what ifs": *What if I fumble? What if I mess up? What if I fail to answer questions? What if I forget what to say? What if they laugh at me? What if they notice me shaking? What if and more what ifs.*

"Practice, practice, and more practice," Cancio iterated. True enough, a great deal of confidence can come from constant and proper practice. Apart from gaining mastery over the topic, right practice provides anxiety-decreasing, confidence-boosting ground of morale. Much like an athlete training until what he does becomes second in nature, practicing public speaking let's one gain a knack in doing so it feels like an instinct kicks in.

Cancio expounded on the following tips in practicing public speaking:

- ***Know and understand your topic.***

Leave no stone unturned, if you can. Make sure you get the best grasp of the subject. You can never be too careful.

- ***Prepare your key talking points.***

It's your guide, your outline, your compass. It helps you create the big picture of what you are going to present.

▪ ***Spice up your presentation with stories.***

Good public speakers are story tellers. Anecdotes, quotations, life experiences in varying tones help keep your audience engaged.

▪ ***Anticipate questions and corresponding answers.***

Better prepared than being caught off-guard. It will not hurt to anticipate.

▪ ***Practice in front of the mirror.***

Much like a stage play, rehearsal is necessary. Whether in front of the mirror or while taking your sweet time in the toilet, run through your presentation, all the while imagining yourself in front of your audience delivering the best presentation of your life.

▪ ***Practice hand gestures.***

Make it look natural. Resist the temptation to move for every word you speak lest you risk the ignominy of looking like a busy scarecrow.

Nobody was perfect the first time. Many public speakers get drumming heartbeats prior to speaking which they say is normal. If even seasoned speakers admit they are not even perfect, commit errors, and feel anxious, then your case is far from being hopeless.

The bottom line: Confidence in public speaking is gained in public speaking.-

END/ **Lester Panem**