

Client Speaking Opportunities Best Practices

For Staff

These are a list of points to consider when asking clients to speak about their lived experiences in a public setting (e.g., donor events, newsletter profiles). These recommendations are derived from discussions with the Cool Aid Client Advisory Committee and previous lived experience literature.

They are organized into what to consider before the speaking opportunity, during and after.

BEFORE

- Try and give clients sufficient amount of time to consider whether or not they'd like to accept
- Assign a point person to support the client throughout the process e.g., logistics, formatting, proofreading, practicing
- Ensure client is fully informed of event details e.g., audience type, formal/informal, transit options, honorarium, food
- Ensure client is fully informed on speaking details e.g., how long is the speech/interview, what is the purpose of the event/speech, solo/panel, will there be questions
- Ensure fair compensation for time, effort and transit
- Allow for them to have a support person present on the day of e.g., friend, staff member

DURING

- Make sure the point person is there to support the client
- Ensure client has directions on where to be and when, have access to water and food and that they receive their honorarium
- Provide encouragement to the client before and after speaking

AFTER

- Organize an opportunity to debrief after the event has ended. This could be with the appointed support person, a peer worker, a trusted staff member, a friend or others
- Debriefing may involve: going for a walk, a coffee, a phone call
- Possible questions to ask: How do you feel it went? What went well? What would you change? Is there any way we could've better supported you?
- If there is any media communication, photography, videography regarding the event and the client ensure that the client has consulted and approves the communication and signs a model release form

Client Speaking Opportunities Best Practices

For Clients

These are some recommendations and points to think about when considering whether or not to accept an opportunity to speak about your lived experiences. We want to ensure that you are supported to the best of our ability. These recommendations are derived from discussions with the Cool Aid Client Advisory Committee and previous lived experience literature. They are organized into what to consider before the speaking opportunity, during and after.

BEFORE

- Take time to think about whether you'd like to speak, consider what's going on in your life at the moment. Do you have enough time to prepare for the speech/ event? Do you have the energy available?
- Think about what you'd like to share, and what you'd like to keep private
- Know that you will have an appointed staff member to support you throughout with tasks such as formatting, proofreading, practicing, providing event details
- Keep in mind that you are not obligated to speak even if you have already said yes
- Practice, practice, practice!
- Plan how you will get to the event on the day of
- if needed, think of some calming strategies for the event e.g., deep breaths, calming visualizations

DURING

- Check in with your point person about the logistics of the day and anything else you might need
- Bring a friend to the event if you feel more comfortable that way
- Use you prepared calming strategies
- Bring any notes if needed

AFTER

- Make sure to take some time to reflect on the experience, such as:
 - How do you feel it went?
 - Did you enjoy it?
 - Is there anything about it you didn't enjoy?
 - What would you change if you did it again?
- It's nice to be able to discuss these reflections with someone else as well this could be your point person, another staff member, or a friend
- Your point person will reach out to organize a debriefing moment (a call, a coffee, a walk)