

VSA Texas

Opening Minds, Opening Doors: Promoting Self-Advocates as Speakers



6-Session Workshop Preparing a Powerful Story for Presentation

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Introduction To OMOD

Opening Minds, Opening Doors (OMOD) is a six-week (or six session) workshop designed to enable adults with developmental and other disabilities to write personal stories and develop the public speaking skills to present those stories in a variety of venues (conferences, civic group meetings, schools, legislative sessions, etc.). Each OMOD workshop ends with a Showcase where participants make presentations to an audience of friends, family and interested members of their local communities.

For Participants

- OMOD encourages adults with disabilities to imagine themselves as belonging in, and contributing to the larger community and builds skills for active engagement with a diverse social group.
- OMOD uses a 3-part process to help participants produce and deliver their personal stories as presentations:
 - **Writing:** Participants write and share their stories during the workshop
 - **Editing:** Participants select one main story from their writings, and develop/edit it for use in a public presentation with help from staff and volunteers and/or other participants.
 - **Coaching:** Each participant receives individual coaching for performance before an OMOD Showcase of family, friends and others.

Benefits of participating in an OMOD Workshop:

- Opportunity to write and share personal stories during the workshop, and later in a public forum
- Experience a sense of community among the participants – this happens organically because as we share our stories, we learn about each other
- Each writer-participant receives support in every stage of the process
- Learn basics of public speaking: using voice and body, movement, using microphones, the importance of timing and many other basic tools for delivering a great story.
- Telling your story is self-advocacy at its best!
- Explore possible venues/forums that could offer speaking opportunities to OMOD participants when the workshop is over.

For Potential Audiences

- When OMOD participants share a story about their lives, they have the chance to open the minds of those who hear. And that can open doors for participants and their audiences.
- Once people become more familiar with what life with a disability is like, many find it easier to include people with disabilities in:
 - Art, music, theatre
 - Community projects
 - Social and sporting events
 - And so many more daily events that we all share!

FACILITATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Orient and prepare OMOD volunteers to assist as needed in the workshop.**
 - You will find a volunteer training guide in the Resource Section of this manual.
- **Follow the OMOD schedule as closely as possible.**
 - Tasks for each week are outlined in this guide. Please follow the schedule as closely as possible so that Weeks 5 and 6 will yield the best story presentations possible.
 - At the end of every session there are notes for Facilitators (Facilitator Homework). These notes will explain what you need to do in order to prepare for the coming week's workshop.
- **Right from the start, pay attention to the stories:**
 - Look for stories with common themes. Ask yourself if these stories could easily be transformed into ensemble pieces, or if the themes might be ones that resonate with others in the group.
 - Pay attention to conversations that take place during breaks. Sometimes, in these off-the-cuff conversations, interesting stories emerge.
 - Ensure that participants write about their own lives, making their experiences the focus of the story. OMOD's goal is to promote self-advocates who use stories based on their personal experience to create

new visibility in their communities. The stories should reflect that goal whenever possible.

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- **Create a safe environment where everyone's level of participation is equally valued, and personal information is treated with respect.**
 - Accept all attempts to write during the workshop. Modify if needed.
 - Make sure that participants stay positive in their feedback to each other.
 - During Session 1, establish that the information that is shared in the workshop stays within the workshop context so that privacy does not become an issue.
 - Be Playful whenever possible. People participate more if the environment is upbeat and cheerful.
- **Practice OMOD's "ethic of accommodation," by modifying the writing, editing or coaching process to maximize success.**
 - Specific strategies for modifying or accommodating to address strengths and/or areas of individual need during the writing, editing and coaching tasks of the workshop are included in "OMOD and the Ethic of Accommodation" located in OMOD TEACHING RESOURCES section at the end of this guide.
 - **Be mindful to accommodate anyone who faces challenges related to the delivery of their story.** Some options are:
 - Cue cards for participants who need to read, or say, passages that are short and concise.
 - Use photos to enhance delivery.
 - iPad can be used to speak, or to play back other media to enhance story delivery.
 - Smart phones can also be used for playback of a story.
 - Arrange for a peer partner to help.
 - Participant can delegate a person to speak in his or her place.
 - Be creative! Every workshop presents its own opportunity to explore what inclusion and accommodation really mean.

- **Respectfully coach participants to prepare for conference and other presentations.**
 - Facilitators, and all volunteers will be needed for the coaching segments of the workshop (Session 5 and 6) in order to ensure individual coaching.
 - Coaching instructions and materials are included in the Session 5 section of this guide.

Using the Facilitator Guide

This guide is divided into 6 sessions that address what you need to do and know each week in order to facilitate the OMOD process. It also provides step-by-step instructions for selected activities. Each session uses the same basic framework:

- **Prior to the Session:** This section identifies equipment, materials, and additional support you will require. Use it as a checklist to ensure you have everything ready for the session.
- **Learning Objectives:** These will help you keep the group on track. If questions or suggestions from the participants move off into unexpected directions, use the learning objectives to redirect the focus of the group.
- **Session Schedule:** Each week's schedule of activities is provided. Each weekly schedule of tasks (bulleted list) corresponds to the workshop description that follows. This Workshop Description is the fully developed information you will need in order to conduct the workshop.
 - *Suggested Times:* The times shown in the section notes are meant to be suggestions only, although following them will ensure that the session is completed within the allotted time.
 - *Remember, some of the participants may be relying on other people or services to provide their transportation, so adhering to the start and stop times for the sessions is important.*
- **Workshop Description:** Each week's workshop tasks are fully explained.
 - **Warm Up:** This section offers suggestions on exercises to put participants at ease, both physically and socially. Feel free to modify the exercises to correspond with the abilities of the group.
 - **Weekly Activities:** Each week's goals and tasks are clearly explained.

- **Break:** Ensure participants are clear about physical boundaries for break, smoking areas, bathroom facilities, etc. Ensuring that the session starts up again promptly after the break will keep the weekly sessions within the desired time limits.
- **Participant Homework:** The handout(s) you need to distribute are provided in each week's section of the Facilitator Guide. Review the contents with the group to ensure that participants understand the assignment and what they are meant to do with it.
- **Facilitator Homework:** This section will remind Facilitators what they need to do in preparation for the following week's session.
- **Detailed Activity Instructions:** Step-by-step instructions for each week's activities.

OMOD Facilitator Guide

Quick Contents List

WEEK 1: GETTING STARTED WITH STORIES

Participant Homework: *Listen to Your World*

Facilitator Instructions

Facilitator Homework

WEEK 2: DESCRIPTION AND POINT OF VIEW

Participant Handouts:

- *Point of View*
- *Show versus Tell*
- *OMOD Peer Performance Questions*

Participant Homework: *Photographic Stories: Learning to Describe*

Facilitator Homework

WEEK 3: WORDS, VOICE, BODY, AND KNOWING THE AUDIENCE

Participant Handouts:

- *During the Presentation*
- *Presentation Warm-up Exercises*

Participant Homework: Continue developing, revising showcase story

Facilitator Homework

WEEK 4: COMMITTING TO YOUR STORY

Participant Handouts:

- *Finding the Power Punches*
- *Prepare, Prepare, Prepare*

Participant Homework:

- *Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall*
- Continue revising Showcase story

FACILITATOR Instructions: *Complete these after Session 4*

- Ensure that you have a readable final copy of each piece by end of session so that you can generate Showcase Lineup (see *Generating Draft of Showcase Lineup*)
- Make coaching packets for each participant (see “*Coaching Performance for OMOD Participants*”), including:
 - 1 Readable copy of final story draft for participant, 1 for Session 5 coach
 - Coaching sample form, as a reference
 - Coaching template (complete one per participant)

WEEK 5: One-on-One Coaching and Practice

Participant Handouts:

- *Individual* coaching notes

Facilitator Homework:

- Finalize script
- Print copies as needed (discussed in Session 5 section of this guide)
- Meet/confer with any participant who still needs work on their piece
- Offer rehearsal for ensemble pieces if possible during the week

WEEK 6: Rehearsal and Delivery of Showcase

Materials needed:

- Print out of Showcase Lineup for the cast as needed
- Up to 6 copies of the full script
- All AV equipment and person to run it
- Emcee

OMOD Teaching Resources

Materials included:

- OMOD and the Ethic of Accommodation
- Generating Draft of Showcase Lineup
- Who’s My Audience?
- Video Coaching
- OMOD Volunteer Training Guide

Session 1

Getting Started with Stories

Session 1

Getting Started with Stories

Prior to Session 1

- Conduct a workshop for the assistants and mentors to establish a protocol for providing effective coaching and note-taking/scribing assistance to the participants. Highlight the importance of individual needs being met through an ethic of accommodation. (Refer to OMOD Teaching Resources.)
- Ensure scribes, writing coaches, or audio recording devices are available for participants who require assistance.
- Ensure that the following equipment/supplies are available and in working condition:
 - White board or flip chart with suitable markers.
 - Sufficient number of handouts ready for distribution. (*Listen to Your World*)
 - Writing materials for participants who might not bring them
- **Read** Detailed Activity Instructions at the end of Session 1

Learning Objectives

- *Participants will explore the concepts of “Opening Minds, Opening Doors.”*
- *Participants will use free-writing techniques to develop story ideas.*

Session 1 Schedule

- **Introduction to the OMOD Process** (5-10 minutes)
- **Warm Up: Name Game** (10-15 minutes)
- **Class Rules** (15 minutes)
- **Activity: Informal Interview** (10-15 minutes)
- **Introduction to “Opening Minds, Opening Doors”** (20-25 minutes)
- ***Free-Writing* Exercise** (15-20 minutes)
- **Break** (15 minutes)
- **Read to Your Peers: *Free Writing*** (30-45 minutes)
- **Discussion** (10 minutes)
- **Encouraging Writing In and Out of Class** (5 minutes)
- **Participant Homework Assignment** (5 minutes)

Session 1

Workshop Activities

Introduction to OMOD*(5 minutes)*

Explain to the participants that during the six-week workshop, they will be expected and supported to:

- write and revise a single autobiographical story
- incorporate simple public speaking skills and microphone techniques to prepare a memorable presentation (ranging from 4-6 minutes in length)
- participate in the OMOD Showcase (public performance) for a small showcase of friends, family, peers, and program staff at the end of the workshop.

Warm Up*(10-15 minutes)*

Name Game: Each person in the room chooses an adjective that best describes him or herself as a person, an adjective that begins with the first letter of his/her first name. As the game progresses around the room, the new participants are asked to remember and recite the other participants' names before or after they state their own name. Whenever a participant has difficulty remembering, encourage others to help so that the exercise is playful and engaging.

- Review everyone's name at the end of the activity by asking for group members to try to name everyone.

Class Rules*(15 minutes)**(flipchart activity)*

Initiate a group discussion to establish class rules. Explain that we are all going to be sharing personal information and getting to know one another and it is good to have some guidelines about how to talk with each other and respond to other people's stories. Give examples if necessary, to encourage discussion. Write down their rules on the flipchart.

Examples can include:

- Respect other's opinions
- Pay attention when someone is telling their story
- Have fun.

Activity: Informal Interview*(10-15 minutes)*

Because participants will be working closely, sharing personal stories and offering each other constructive feedback on their stories and presentations, it is important that they grow comfortable and get to know each other. This exercise asks each participant to interview a peer and learn three things about that person and share that information with the group.

Introduction to Opening Minds, Opening Doors*(20 minutes)**(flip chart or chalkboard activity)*

Explore the meaning of the phrases, “open minds,” “open doors,” “closed minds,” and “closed doors.” Engage the group in a discussion about what those terms mean to the participants, then lead the group to identify specific “doors” that have been opened, or closed, to them. Encourage participants to brainstorm words and phrases for each of these phrases and record their input on a white board or flip chart. Use this activity to explain the goals of the workshop so that each person understands the meaning and significance of the metaphor as well as the structure and “end product” of the workshop process.

Free-Writing Exercise*(15 minutes)*

Invite participants to “free-write” for 15 minutes using the words they generated in their previous activity. This could include, but not be limited to, experiences of “open doors,” or “being left out,” or “surprising moments of success,” etc. Participants can use any method available for producing a story (written, dictated, scribe, etc.) These free-writes may serve as the foundation for Showcase stories.

* For participants needing scribes, coaches, or audio recording devices, establish quiet writing stations if possible so that each participant can comfortably dictate without distracting others.

**Be sure to have a method to collect all of the writings at the end of each class, as you will need to be familiar with them in order to select, revise and edit their final stories.

Break*(15 minutes)***Read to Your Peers: Free-Writing***(30-45 minutes)*

Invite the participants to share their free-writes with the class.

Discussion*(10 minutes)*

Lead a discussion of participants' feelings about speaking in front of people. Conclude the discussion by inviting the group to brainstorm some things that people can do to make themselves feel more confident about speaking in front of a group.

Encouraging Writing in and out of class*(5 minutes)*

- ✓ Review how writing personal stories can “open doors.”
- ✓ Encourage each participant to complete the assigned writing homework every week and share in class.
- ✓ Ask the participants how to best accommodate their needs to make these assignments accessible and successful.

Participant Homework:*(5 minutes)*

Distribute the *Listen to Your World* handout and instruct the participants to listen and make a list of all the night sounds they hear before going to bed and then write a paragraph or more about what fears or thoughts or images the sounds may have triggered. Allow at least 5 minutes before the end of class to read through the assignment instructions and answer any questions the participants may have.

FACILITATOR Homework

- ✓ ***Make sure that you have a copy of every written piece that each participant produces, including in-class and at-home writing.***
- ✓ Depending on your situation, you can keep either a paper or an electronic file of the writings. Some options for capturing text from writers: use a USB to transfer stories from tablets or laptops, make Xerox copies of hand-written work, encourage email exchanges of written work as possible, arranging for a scribe to transcribe from speech to text for homework, etc.

Session 1

Detailed Activity Instructions

Session 1: How to Conduct the NAME GAME**Here are the basic instructions for this activity:**

1. Make sure all participants and volunteers are either seated or standing in a circle and facing each other.
2. Ask participants to think of an adjective that begins with the first letter of their first name and describes their personality.
3. As some participants may not know what an adjective is, ask the group if anyone can tell the group what an adjective is. If no participant offers a definition of “adjective,” then you will need to provide it, along with some examples of adjectives that correspond with your name.
 - a. *Example:* “An adjective is a word that describes. Here are some adjectives that I could use for my own name: Energetic Eric, Easy-going Eric, Earthy Eric, etc. But today I'm feeling more easy-going, so I'm going to call myself Easy-going Eric.”
 - b. Defining adjective is helpful to get the participants thinking about how they might describe themselves, but don't feel compelled to use a strict definition of adjective for this activity.
Example: A participant might have difficulty finding an adjective that describes her personality, but may be able to think of a favorite animal, place, or hobby with relative ease. If so, accept what they come up with. “Tabby Cat Cathy,” and “Football Fred” work fine. The goal of this activity is for participants to introduce themselves, share a little about who they are through the words they select to describe themselves, and start to remember each other's names.
4. The first person who provides their ‘adjective name’ shares it with the group. The second person repeats the first person’s name, then shares their own. The third person needs to repeat the adjective names of the first two participants, add his or her own, and so forth until everyone has provided an adjective name. If it’s difficult for anyone to remember the names of people who came before them, encourage others to help, so the exercise remains playful and engaging.
5. At the end of the exercise, ask if anyone can name everyone else. If nobody offers, try it yourself and then move on to the next activity.

NOTE: There is a lot to get done on the first day, so keep the activity moving forward as best as you can. Try not to spend more than 15 minutes on this activity.

Session 1: How to **Generate Class Rules**

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Everyone can remain seated in the same circle arrangement as the previous *Name Game* activity.
2. Explain to the participants that since they will each be writing and sharing personal stories that are sometimes emotional to share, it's important to set some ground rules so that everyone feels totally comfortable and safe to tell their stories in class.
3. Find a place on the wall to hang a flip chart or a blank space on a whiteboard to write on. Write "Our Rules" or "Class rules" at the top.
4. Ask the participants what some good rules would be for the class. Write what they say on the flipchart. If anything is not clear, ask the participant(s) for clarification. Be open to their suggestions.
5. If the participants cannot think of any rules, you can give a few examples to help them get started, but it's important to let the participants contribute as much as possible. This will encourage further participation in other activities and help the participants gain greater confidence and ownership in the class.

OMOD rules might include the following:

- a. Respect each other's opinions.
 - b. Pay attention when someone is telling their story.
 - c. Confidentiality. Don't share someone else's story outside of the class if you don't have their permission.
 - d. Have fun.
6. Review the list of rules and ask everyone to agree on them.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- You will be responsible for keeping the discussion to no more than 10 – 15 minutes.
- You will stay open to any suggested rule, asking for clarification if the contributor's meaning is not clear.
- Encourage people who may not feel comfortable contributing to the discussion by asking them a direct question that might put them at ease.
 - *Example:* "What do you think about this rule?" or "How could you follow this rule" or "What happens if any of us don't follow this rule?"
- Help generate rules if needed.
- Find a place to keep the rules in view during the entire OMOD workshop so that people can refer to them if needed.
- Refer to them yourself if/when you need to remind participants that they have agreed to specific rules of conduct.

NOTE: The rules can be useful for resolving any interpersonal or behavioral issues that may arise later in the class, so creating them is an important activity and should take at least 10-15 minutes.

Session 1: How to Conduct the Informal Interview Activity

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Ask each person to quickly find a partner (or turn to the person closest to them).
2. Tell them that they will be asking their partner 3 questions (chosen from the sample list of questions below).
3. Partner # 1 will have 3 minutes to ask the questions, write down the information
4. Then Partner #2 gets to ask the questions, also in 3 minutes.
5. When everyone is finished with the interview part, Partners introduce each other to the rest of the group using the information they discovered.
6. **Note:** If participants are confused how this works, demonstrate with a quick 2 question interview with a partner of your choice.

As the facilitator of this activity

- You will need to **make sure everyone has a partner**. If there aren't enough people, be a partner yourself and/or find a volunteer.
- You will be **responsible for time-keeping**: Tell participants when it's time to switch roles and when Partner # 2's time is up.
- **Checking to see that each pair understands the exercise**. Remind them that they need to write down the person's answer (or use whatever memory aid is needed) because they will need that information when it's their turn to introduce their partner to the group.

Note: You may need to find a third person to assist if one or both partners have limited skills for remembering the responses to the questions.

- **Provide or generate the interview questions**
 - *Your options here are:*
 - Suggest questions to the group
 - Ask them for suggestions, then write them on a chalk board or flip chart
 - *Or:* Make a flip chart before or during the session with a short list of questions to ask/choose from. Give participants a chance to add a question of their own. Decide as a group which 3 questions to use for the interview. Indicate that on the flip chart/chalk board.
 - Leave the completed chart up during the interview activity to provide written reminders for anyone who forgets the questions.

- **Note:** It's best if everyone answers the same questions, primarily because sometimes this information can become a group piece.

Sample interview questions:

- a. What's your name, and why are you in this Opening Minds Opening Doors workshop?
- b. What would you like people to know about you today? (What's interesting about you? What's unique about you?)
- c. What's the thing you're most proud about?
- d. What's the most important thing in your life?
- e. Have you done public speaking before? If so, how did you like doing that?

Session 1: Conducting the **Introduction to Opening Minds, Opening Doors** (Group Brainstorm)

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Place four flip charts on the wall or create four columns on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Each flip chart, or column, should have one of these four phrases written at the top:
 - a. Open Minds
 - b. Open Doors
 - c. Closed Minds
 - d. Closed Doors
2. Engage the group in a discussion about what those terms mean to the participants, then lead the group to identify specific “doors” that have been opened, or closed, to them.

Examples: Ramps to doorways, curb cuts, automatic door-openers “open the doors” to people who use wheelchairs; learning to speak in public can “open the door” to social interaction and getting to know people better; fear of difference or disability can “close doors” to education, social life, and employment
3. Then, beginning with “open minds,” encourage the participants to think of words and phrases they associate with each of the four phrases above. Record their input on each corresponding chart. If the participants get stuck and cannot think of anything for a particular phrase, provide an example or two, as during the class rules activity, or ask a volunteer or assistant to chime in. Here are some frequent responses:
 - a. **Open Minds:** kind, compassionate, understanding, listen
 - b. **Open Doors:** opportunity, accessible, welcoming, travel
 - c. **Closed Minds:** ignorant, fearful, isolated, judgmental
 - d. **Closed Doors:** inaccessible, barriers, exclusion, rejection

As the facilitator of this activity:

- **You will be responsible for keeping the activity within its time limit.** Give each group about 10 minutes to complete their lists before rejoining the big class group and sharing.
- **You may need to vary the activity to suit the size and composition of your group.**
 - *If you have a large class group (10-12) of vocal participants, you may want to split the class into four smaller groups, each with its own facilitator, and assign one flipchart, or column, to each group.*
 - *Or, split the class into two smaller groups and assign each group two of the flip charts.*
 - *If you have a small class group (6-10), or a group that struggles with these concepts, it may be best to do this activity as a class.*

NOTE: The goal of this activity is to make sure each participant understands the meaning and the significance of the metaphor "Opening Minds, Opening Doors" and the role their own stories can have in opening the minds of their audience. Open minds can open doors to opportunities for greater inclusion and participation for people with varying abilities.

Session 1: Conducting Writing Exercise 1: *Free-Writing*

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Once you have completed the group brainstorm using the phrases “open minds,” “open doors,” “closed minds,” “closed doors,” you are now ready to facilitate the first writing exercise.
2. Participants can use any method available for producing a story (written, dictated, scribed, etc.).
3. Invite participants to “free-write” for 15-20 minutes using the words and phrases generated in the group brainstorming activity to prompt personal stories. Provide at least one or two of your own personal examples to help explain how to do this:
 - a. *Example 1:* If you choose the word “exclusion” from the list of “Closed Doors,” you may write a story about a time that you were excluded from an activity or a time that you felt left out of a group.
 - b. *Example 2:* If you choose “travel” from the list of “Open Doors,” you may write about an international trip you took and how that felt like a door opening in your life.
 - c. Most important is that participants write about events that actually happened to them and that this first round of free-writing sets a positive tone for continued generation of personal stories during the workshop.
4. For this first free-writing activity, and throughout the OMOD workshop, if any participant has difficulty responding to the writing prompt for that activity, offer this as an alternative: *“Write about a powerful memory.”* This open-ended invitation to write from memory frees participants to use already established personal or family “stories” as their way to complete the writing task, and these stories are often well suited for presentation during the OMOD Showcase.

As the facilitator of this activity:**Before assigning the prompt:**

- a. Ensure that all participants who will need scribes or assistive technology devices to write have those **accommodations available**.
 - For people who will need a scribe, create a list of potential writing partners, so every participant knows who they will be working with before they begin the assignment.
- b. **If you have extra quiet spaces or rooms available for participants to work in** during this exercise, make these available and assign these spaces to those who request them. These will be especially helpful for participants utilizing scribes or dictation.
- c. Be sure to have a method to **collect all of the writings at the end of each class**, as you will need to be familiar with them in order to select, revise, and edit the participants' final stories.

NOTE: Let the participants know that what they produce during this first free-writing may serve as the foundation for their showcase story but that they will write several more stories and will be able to choose the one they develop into a presentation. Make sure they understand that they will not be asked to share publicly anything they aren't 100% comfortable sharing outside of the class.

Session 1: How to Conduct “Read to Your Peers”

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Once participants have finished writing and are back in the classroom, encourage them to sit in a circle again to read their stories out loud to their peers.
2. Before the readings begin, reiterate that writing and sharing a personal story is a brave and often difficult thing to do and it's easier for each person to succeed if everyone else in the class supports them each step of the way.
3. Remind everyone to keep their feedback constructive and focus on the positive aspects of each presentation. Critique will come later in the writing process.
4. Ask if any participant would like to read their story first. If there are no volunteers, choose someone to read first and then proceed around the circle. People can stand if they want and are able to, but it's not required for the first day's informal reading.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- As for feedback on the first day, focus on the strengths of each piece and what each person does well during the reading.
- You may also want to read through the Class Rules established earlier in this first session so that all members of the group provide the most useful feedback possible.
- In response to each reading, offer feedback for each participant about what seems to be the most important part of their story and what parts of the story seem to have the most power (introducing the idea of “power punch”).
- You are responsible for keeping track of the time.
 - Depending on how many people are in the workshop, how much they write, and how efficiently they read out loud, the suggested 30-45 minutes allotted might need to be extended.

- If you notice that you are running out of time, ask each remaining participant to offer a shorter summary of what they wrote so that everyone can share.

NOTE: It is extremely important in the OMOD process that from day one each participant has the experience of sharing their story with the group.

Session 1

Participant Homework

Session 1
Participant Homework Assignment

Listen to Your World

STEP 1: Spend AT LEAST 15 minutes one night this week to LISTEN to the night sounds just before you go to bed. Listen for the sounds inside of your room, from the hall or the kitchen, and for outside sounds, such as a dog barking, car brakes squealing, the wind rattling the window, etc. LIST as many of these different noises as you can.

**** If "listening" doesn't work for you** (hard of hearing, Deaf/deaf, or difficulty identifying sounds, etc.) take 15 minutes to visually explore some part of your home or other favorite environment, looking for things you don't usually notice. Make a list of at least 5 things that are in the place you explored that don't usually get your attention.

**** If vision is not a reliable information source** for you, do this exercise using your hands to explore (tactile/touch) a space you live in. Run your hand across the table in the kitchen, or pick check out the material that covers the sofa. Make a list of at least 5 things you either have more information about, or noticed for the first time.

STEP 2: WRITE a paragraph or two about these sounds (or sights, or things you touched)—including what fears, joys or thoughts the sounds may have triggered. For example, the dog barking may have reminded you of your first pet, or a radio playing your favorite song may have reminded you of an old school friend.

This activity adapted from Real Stuff The Matters: An introduction to Journal Writing in Inclusive Settings, published by VSA arts, 2003, 2007.

Session 2

Description and Point of View

Session 2

Description and Point of View

Prior to Session 2

- Ensure that the following equipment/supplies are available and in working condition:
 - Sufficient number of handouts and worksheets ready for distribution (*Point of View, Show vs Tell, OMOD Peer Performance Questions, Photographic Stories: Learning to Describe*)
- Ensure scribes, writing coaches, or audio recording devices are available for participants who require assistance.
- Read Detailed Activity Instructions at the end of Session 2.

Learning Objectives

- *Participants will continue to develop the stories written in the first class with a goal of reaching a minimum of three potential stories.*
- *Participants will learn ways to add description to their stories.*
- *Participants will learn how to tell a story from the first-person point of view.*

Session 2 Schedule

- **Warm-Up Activity** (10 minutes)
- **Writing Exercise 1: *First Impressions*** (25 minutes)
- **Read to Your Peers: *First Impressions*** (20-30 minutes)
- **Lecture on *Description* and *Point of View*** (10 minutes)
- **Writing Exercise 2: *Description*** (30 minutes)
- **Break** (5 minutes)
- **Energizer** (5 minutes)
- **Read to Your Peers: *Description*** (30-45 minutes)
- **Lesson Review** (5 minutes)
- **PARTICIPANT Homework Assignment** (5 minutes)

Session 2

Workshop Activities

Warm-Up Activity*(10 minutes)*

Invite participants to verbally respond to the prompt: "I am... I feel... I want... I offer..." This is not meant to be a long or complicated activity, just as a way to check in. (Example: "I am Joe" or "I am a human being, I feel happy today, I want to write about my new puppy, I offer my friendship to everyone in the class.")

Writing Exercise 1: *First Impressions**(25 minutes)*

Instruct participants to respond to the following two prompts and spend at least 10 minutes on each:

1. **Respond to the prompt:** "When you first meet someone, what is their first impression of you?"
2. Write about something that's important to you as a person. It could be a "thing" or a relationship, an activity you do or want to do, anything that's important.

Read to Your Peers: *First Impressions**(20-30 minutes)***Lecture on *Description* and *Point of View****(10 minutes)*

Distribute the *Point of View* and *Show vs. Tell* handouts, then provide a brief introduction to useful storytelling tips of description and point of view. Give examples of how using description and point of view gives life to stories.

- **Description:** Details make your story believable and help captivate your audience. When writing your stories, consider the specific details (e.g., Were you in a city or a town? Was it day or night? Was it hot or cold?) as well as the senses (sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch). Which details are most effective in transporting your audience to the world of your story? (Give an example or two or elicit input from the participants to ensure that this concept is understood.)
- **Point of View:** This is your story, so it is 1st person point of view, not 3rd person (he, she, they). Look at the world through your eyes and tell your story.

Writing Exercise 2: *Description**(30 minutes)*

Instruct the participants to add more details to any story they have written in the workshop.

- Describe the place, the people, the weather, how you felt, and whatever else helps to make your story feel more “alive.” A writing coach may assist with identifying sections of your story that would benefit from added description.

~ Or ~

- Focus on the point of view and review your story in a way that alters the impact of the story by changing the point of view.

Break*(15 minutes)***Energizer***(5 minutes)*

Lead the class in a few new stretching and vocal exercises.

Read to Your Peers: *First Impressions**(30-45 minutes)*

- Review the *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* worksheet and ask participants to note the behaviors identified in it.
- Emphasize that they **will not** share critiques with each other at this time. This is an exercise for writers to begin to become aware of vocal clarity, projection, eye contact, etc.
- Invite the participants to share a story with the class
- *It is not necessary for everyone to read through their whole story at this point, it is more important that each participant has a chance to practice with the microphone.*
- (See *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* worksheet)

Lesson Review:*(5 minutes)*

- **First, taking another person’s point-of-view helps you to understand your “reader” or “audience.”** Whenever you speak in public, you have to consider who’s listening to you. You would present your story differently at a conference on healthcare than you would for parents of children with disabilities. So, you must always consider point-of-view.
- **Second, describing, or adding meaningful details, is also important because it brings your story to life.** The best way to be effective in writing and speaking is to “show” someone what happened and not to just “tell” the story.

Participant Homework:*(5 minutes)*

Invite a participant to read through the Session 2 **“Photographic Stories: Learning to Describe”** assignment instructions, then offer an example of a personal story inspired by a photo.

Instructions for writers: Find a photo, or memory, of something that creates an emotion in you and write about it. It may be a photograph of a family member, a favorite vocation, or a photo of a national park from a magazine.

FACILITATOR HOMEWORK

Get copies of everything that was written today before participants leave. If any participants are behind in the writing, determine what supports they need and attempt to provide them

Session 2

Detailed Activity Instructions

Session 2: How to Conduct **Warm-Up Activity**

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Make sure everyone, including participants, volunteers, and staff members, is seated in a circle before starting this activity.
2. Write the following four phrases on a flipchart or whiteboard/chalkboard and make sure they are visible to the entire class:
 - a. I am...
 - b. I feel...
 - c. I want...
 - d. I offer...
3. Tell the class that everyone will verbally respond to these four prompts. Offer a personal example to demonstrate a complete response and kick off the activity:

Example: "I am a great guy, I feel happy today, I want to help you all write stories you can be proud of, I offer my friendship to everyone in the class."

4. Then, moving around the circle, ask each person in the circle to also verbally respond to the four prompts.

As facilitator of this activity:

- This is meant to be a quick and easy way to check in with each other at the beginning of the class. Keep it playful if possible.
- If anyone gets stuck or does not know how to respond, encourage them to say the first thing that comes to mind. If they still can't think of anything, offer to come back to them after moving around the circle.
- Listen to each person's response. Sometimes you will hear cues about what you might do to help a participant have a good day in the workshop.

NOTE: "Warming up" or "checking in" can help people feel at ease with each other, which makes for a much better workshop experience.

Session 2: Conducting Writing Exercise: *First Impressions*

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. As with the writing exercise in Session 1, participants can use any method available for producing a story (written, dictated, scribed, etc.)
2. Provide all participants with the accommodations they will need (including the adjustments made above) before assigning the prompt. This includes:
 - a. Accommodations needed in order to fully participate in the writing process (scribes, assistive technology devices, visual aids, etc.)
 - For people who need a scribe, create a list of possible writing partners so every participant knows who they will be working with before they begin the assignment.
 - b. Locate/create quiet work spaces or use available rooms in the same building for participants who request them, especially for those utilizing scribes or dictation.
3. Write the “First Impressions” prompt on a flip chart or whiteboard and ask each of them participants to respond:

Prompt: “When you meet someone new, what is their first impression of you?”

Alternate prompts: Offer 2 alternatives for those who aren’t successful with, or don’t enjoy, the “First Impressions” prompt. **Add these prompts to the flip chart.** (Make sure that any participants with visual impairment understand each of the prompts.)

- “Write about something that’s important to you as a person.” It could be a “thing” or a relationship, an activity you do or want to do, anything that’s important.
 - “Write about a powerful memory.”
4. Give the participants 10 minutes to write and notify everyone when there are only two minutes left.
 5. After 10 minutes, ask the participants to stop and then choose one of the other prompts to write about. Give them 10 minutes to work on this second prompt and notify them when the time is almost up.

As facilitator of this activity:

- As always, you are responsible for keeping the activity within the time allotted.
- **Accommodations:** If any participants struggled with the first session's writing exercise, brainstorm with those participants to identify accommodations and supports.
 - For example, if a participant felt confident they would be able to write or type independently but realized through doing the activity that they tire too easily or need help coming up with what to write, you may need to assign a scribe to this participant.
 - If a participant was able to write independently during the first writing exercise but feels they would work better in a quieter environment, investigate a possible alternative space for them to work.
 - Frequently participants may not know why they struggled with an exercise. There is always a solution, and usually through talking it out with a participant, the solution will present itself. **Ask:** What was the easy part of the writing exercise? What was hard? What have you done at other times when you felt like you weren't sure you could do what's being asked of you? How can I help you get started?
- **For participants who want to use the "Write about a powerful memory" prompt,** be careful not to give much more information than the prompt itself. This prompt can elicit many interesting stories if writer/participants are free to interpret the prompt in their own ways.
- It is okay if the participants are not able to completely flesh out both stories. Most important is that they identify 1-2 additional options for their showcase story. Even if they experience a total block with one of the prompts, that would at least help them to eliminate a potentially difficult story to pursue.

NOTE: "First Impressions" is a creative exercise that most participants enjoy. These stories lend themselves to being integrated into an ensemble piece for the Showcase because they highlight similarities and differences of each participant.

Session 2: Read to Your Peers: *First Impressions***Here are the basic instructions for this activity:**

1. Once participants are finished writing and back in the classroom, encourage everyone to sit in a circle again to share what they wrote.
2. Ask if any participant would like to read their story first. If there are no volunteers, choose someone to read first and then go around the circle. People can stand if they want and are able to, but standing is not required.
3. As this is only the second sharing activity of the class, you may want to reiterate that writing and sharing a personal story sometimes requires bravery and that it's easier for each person to succeed if everyone in the class supports them each step of the way. Remind participants to keep their feedback constructive and focus on the positive aspects of each presentation.

As facilitator of this activity:

- When offering your own feedback, focus on the strengths of each piece and what each person does well in reading. Tell each participant what's powerful about their story and what a future audience might to learn more about.
- If you have a class group that quickly gets the hang of giving constructive feedback you can spend less time reviewing the feedback guidelines.
- Similarly, if you have a class group that is persistently overly negative or critical, you may need to spend even more time covering these guidelines.

Session 2: Lecture on *Description* and *Point of View*

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Distribute the *Show vs Tell* handout to everyone and ask one of the participants to read it out loud to the group. (See sample discussion script below.)
2. Ask if there are any questions. If not, move on to *Point of View*.
3. Distribute the *Point of View (POV)* handout to everyone and ask one of the participants to read it out loud to the group. (See sample discussion script below.)
4. Ask if there are any questions. If not, provide instructions for the next writing exercise.

As facilitator of this activity

- Here is a sample script of what you might say to reiterate the points made on the *Show versus Tell* handout:
 - “Details make your story believable and help captivate your audience.”
 - “When writing your stories, consider the specific details: Were you in a city or a town? Was it day or night? Was it hot or cold?” Mention the senses - sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch – as additional information that completes a reader’s experience.
 - Which details are most effective in transporting your audience to the world of your story?
- Here is a sample script of what you might say to reiterate the points made on the *Point of View* handout:
 - This is your story, so it is 1st person (I, me, my) point of view, not 3rd person (he, she, they). Look at the world through your eyes and tell us your story.
 - Ask if anyone can imagine an OMOD story that might call for using either 2nd or 3rd person. Discuss how this may be possible, or even useful, while still maintaining the autobiographical element of the OMOD process.
 - **Example:** Writing about what someone else feels, or lives, can help you understand your own life better. Could you write a story about an event in your life that you write from your parent’s point of view? Your church pastor’s? The neighbor who makes too much noise? What could you/did you learn?

Note: It’s worth your time to go back and check for understanding of the difference between “show” and “tell.” (Refer back to handout)

Session 2: Conducting Writing Exercise 2: *Description***Here are the basic instructions for this activity:**

1. Providing the same writing partners and writing methods the participant used in previous writing assignments, ask participants to add more description (specific details) to any story they have written in the workshop thus far. These options should include:
 - a. Session 1 Writing Exercise 1: Free-Writing
 - b. Session 1 Homework Assignment: Listen to Your World
 - c. Session 2 Writing Exercise 1: First Impressions
2. Everyone will have 30 minutes to complete this writing exercise. Be sure to notify the participants when there are only five minutes remaining in the activity.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- You may need to help participants understand what it means to “add description” and detail to a story.
 - Add words that better convey a sense of an object, a situation, or a desire, etc.
 - Instead of “cardboard box wasn’t good enough,” try “The box, with its well-worn brown cardboard flaps, wasn’t up to the task.”
 - Instead of “she was scared,” try, “Her suddenly wide eyes, and the way she turned quickly on her heel and darted away from him, said everything.”
 - Instead of “I was proud,” try “The table was perfect. The height, the hand-finished surface of the wood, the stable legs, it all made me proud.”
- **You may need to review several ways to add description.**
 - Using the handwritten or typed draft of the piece to which they would like to add description, the participants can add description by writing or having a scribe write for them, by hand, in the margins on either side of the existing text.
 - Opening a word document file on a computer and typing the additional description directly into the story.
 - Rewriting the entire story or select passages and adding description in the rewritten piece.
 - Any of the above options work. Most important is that participants begin to think about what descriptions may be effective in transporting their audiences to the world of their stories.

- If any participants finish early, you and/or a volunteer or other helper can review what they have written.
 - Can you identify the most important part(s) of the story? If yes, discuss this with the writer.
 - Can the writer identify the “meaning” of the story? (What he or she is trying to tell the reader/audience.)
 - Is there anything they could add to what they wrote? Review for parts of the story that seem to need more development.
 - Ask: “What does this part mean?” Or, “Can you give me an example of this? I’m not sure what you are saying here.”
 - ASK: Is there anything you want to add to this story?

NOTE: Description adds to a story when it provides information that helps a reader know what is happening, or sense the environment of the story, or when it adds depth to a character. If added description doesn’t enrich the story, it’s best left out of the text.

Session 2: Read to Your Peers: *Description*

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Make sure the classroom is arranged so that all of the students and staff are oriented, or facing, a "stage" area with a microphone. This is where participants will go to present their stories to the class.
2. Distribute the *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* handout to everyone and ask one of the participants to read it aloud to the group.
 - a. You may want to repeat or review each point on the handout so that everyone fully understands.
 - b. Emphasize that they will not share their critiques with each other today, but they should start to pay attention to:
 - vocal clarity
 - projection
 - eye contact
 - and body language
 - and what these performance elements may communicate to their audiences.
3. Invite the participants to come up and present their stories using the microphone. If no one volunteers to present first, simply call one person at a time to come up and present.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- Keep track of the time. You have 30-45 minutes for reading the stories.
 - If you notice this activity is taking longer than you anticipated, suggest that each participant read an excerpt of their story, such as the first paragraph of their story, a paragraph that they considerably altered or expanded using description,
 - or ask them to paraphrase what they did, instead of reading through their whole story.
- When offering your own feedback, focus on the strengths of each piece and what each person does well in reading. Tell each participant what you like about their story and what you want to learn more about in future drafts of their story.
- Remind the class that nobody is expected to give a perfect presentation today or even during the final showcase, and if they struggle with any of the performative aspects of their presentations, that is okay.

NOTE: The *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* handout is simply meant to be helpful and to identify aspects of their presentations they should consider more carefully as they move forward in the class. Try to keep this positive and constructive

Session 2

HANDOUTS

Session 2 Handout

POINT OF VIEW (POV)

Imagine: You are sitting in a park, on a bench, under a large tree. From where you sit, from your “point of view,” the park is shady and cool. Someone sitting in a bench on the other side of the park might be looking out onto a sunny playground and would describe the park as hot and dusty. He sees it from a different “point of view.”

“Point of view” is the way a writer allows a reader (or an audience member) to “see” and “hear” what’s going on in a story. IN OMOD, most of the individual stories are written in “first person” point of view. This means that the story you are writing is about YOU.

We use First Person Point of View in OMOD because we want YOU to tell your own story.

- Your reader, and the people who hear you speak, will know the story is about you because of the words you choose - words like “I, me, my, mine.”

Example: “I woke up this morning and the cool breeze, which is unusual in Texas on a July morning, made *me* feel...”

Example: “The lights were flickering on and off and I was worried the lights would go out, so I got my flashlight next to my bed. I felt a little nervous because I thought there could be a tornado.”

That’s exactly what we want in OMOD!

Your story, told in your words, from *your point of view*.

Session 2 Handout

SHOW VS. TELL

In order to invite your audience into the experience of your story you need to engage them emotionally. Your language should show the reader or listener what it is like to be in the situation you're describing.

Telling a story:

"I get up in the morning and drink orange juice."

"Telling" a story can be dry and mechanical, and boring.

"Showing" the same story:

Imagine "showing" the experience:

I wake up to the light of the early morning sun as I listen to the ripple of the wind dancing through my bedroom blinds. I'm alive and thirsty. In that moment of peace, I make my way down the hall, toward the kitchen, an oasis of comfort, family, food, and, Oh yes, orange juice!

Use the Five Senses to illustrate your picture:

Sight – Sound – Taste – Touch – Smell

Session 2 Handout

OMOD Peer Performance Questions

Voice

- ❖ Were you able to hear the speaker?
- ❖ Did the speaker's voice seem friendly and calm?
- ❖ Did you understand most of the words? Do you understand the story?
- ❖ Did their voice keep you interested?
- ❖ How many times did the speaker use fillers, like "um," "uh," "you know."

Eye Contact, Posture & Body Language

- ✓ **Speaker's body language**
Confident and happy?
Nervous? Excited?
- ✓ **Eye contact** – Did the speaker pay attention to people in the audience?
- ✓ **Posture** – What did the person's body posture tell you?
("I'm glad to be here," "I'm scared to death," "I'm not sure what to do now." Something else.)

Session 2

Participant Homework

Session 2 Participant Homework Assignment

Photographic Stories: Learning to *Describe*

STEP 1: FIND a photograph that is important or special to you. If you don't have any photographs, or if your visual skills make working with photographs difficult or impossible, just *remember* a moment, or place, or person that is important to you.

The photo, or memory, might be:

- Yourself, or someone in your family
- A pet or a friend
- An event (like a wedding, a conference, a birthday party)
- Someone who has inspired or influenced you
- A landscape, a place you have been
- Or an object or possession that holds significance for you.

STEP 2: Once you know exactly the image you want to share, IMAGINE describing it to someone who has never seen the photo, or who was not there in the moment that you are remembering. How would you tell a friend about this over the phone? Answer the following questions to help you describe:

- Who or what is in the photo or the memory? Who took the photo?
- Why do you remember this moment? (Why is there a photo?)
- What do the clothes, eyes, hair, facial expression, posture of the people in this photo/memory tell you about what they were feeling?
- Where was the photo taken? When? What time of the day?
- What strikes you as the most important part of the picture/memory?

STEP 3: WRITE two paragraphs (minimum) to *practice describing*

- **First paragraph: Write your description of the scene, photo, or memory.** (Write down the description you came up with in Step 2.)
- **Second paragraph: Tell us why you chose this photo and why it is important or special to you.**
- **You can write more if you want to!**

Session 3

Words, Voice, Body, and Knowing the Audience

Session 3

Words, Voice, Body, and Knowing the Audience

Prior to Session 3

- Ensure that the following equipment/supplies are available and in working condition:
 - Lavalier (wireless lapel microphone), boom, and podium microphones with amplifiers.
 - Sufficient number of handouts ready for distribution (*During the Presentation, Presentation Warm-up Exercises*)
- Ensure that a volunteer or staff person is available to adjust the microphone for each participant.

Learning Objectives

- *Participants will work with their stories until each has a usable draft that considers the audience.*
- *Participants will learn ways to warm up and relax their bodies and voices.*
- *Participants will begin to consider ways of using their bodies to convey the meaning of their stories.*
- *Participants will be introduced to various microphones.*

Session 3 Schedule

- **Warm-Up Activity** (10 minutes)
- **Pick the Story to Use for the Showcase** (20 minutes)
- **Relaxation and Breathing Exercises** (10 minutes)
- **Vocal Warm-Ups** (5 minutes)
- **Demonstration of Proper Breathing and Posture** (5 minutes)
- **Break** (15 minutes)
- **Read to Your Peers: *Selected Story for Showcase*** (45-60 minutes)
- **Lesson Review** (15 minutes)
- **PARTICIPANT Homework** (5 minutes)

Session 3

Workshop Activities

Warm-Up Activity*(10 minutes)*

Invite the participants to form a circle and sit or stand, as they are able. The first participant will do a simple movement. The second participant will repeat the first movement and then add his/her own movement. Repeat until everyone in the circle has contributed a movement. **This activity helps group members to focus on each other, imitate movements, and remember each other's movements. These shared-focus skills will be integral to later collaborative work.**

Pick the Story to Use for the Showcase*(10 minutes)*

Invite the participants to form small groups of three and choose a facilitator for their group. Instruct them to select the piece of writing they want to further develop for the showcase.

Break*(15 minutes)***Relaxation and Breathing Exercises***(10 minutes)*

Demonstrate exercises like the following to practice in class and at home. (As with every activity, encourage participants to complete these exercises to the best of their abilities.)

- Shoulder rolls
- Belly breathing
- Sing in a high tone and glide lower/repeat from low to high
- Using a low pitch, say "Ho, ho, ho" like Santa Claus
- Breathe in for a count of 5 seconds and out for 5 seconds. Repeat.

Vocal Warm-Ups*(5 minutes)*

Participants will deliver one phrase from their story, in several different voices, including:

- loud/quiet
- breathy/raspy
- slow/fast.

These vocal warm-ups will help the participants to loosen their vocal cords and relax before delivering their stories.

Demonstration of Proper Breathing and Posture*(5 minutes)*

- ❖ Explain to the participants how **deep breathing helps to relieve nervous energy, develop a strong voice, and focus attention;**
- ❖ How all systems in their bodies benefit from more oxygen
- ❖ Demonstrate the ideal posture for speaking, which includes standing up straight with their feet slightly apart, head up and facing outward, making eye contact, and keeping their shoulders relaxed.
- ❖ Encourage participants to follow your lead in utilizing proper breathing and posture, to the best of their ability, depending on their body's capabilities.
- ❖ Distribute *Presentation Warm-Up Exercises* handout

Read to Your Peers: *Selected Story for Showcase**(30-45 minutes)*

Participants will use one of the three microphones available. Reading through their stories, they will concentrate on eye contact, vocal clarity and speed. Their peers will provide supportive feedback on their delivery, using the *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* worksheet.

Three different microphones will be made available for classroom use:

1. lavalier (wireless lapel microphone)
2. boom
3. podium microphone

The class emphasis will be on general use and practice as well as simply growing comfortable using a microphone.

It is important for the facilitator to recognize which microphone setup will work best for each participant. Experiment with each person, allowing the full range of options, and decide together which works best. People who use augmentative communication devices may amplify the device with a boom mic or by plugging the devices directly into a public address (PA) system or separate set of speakers.

Determine the best possible placement of any written materials that the participants will need to successfully present their stories. For those using a boom or lavalier microphone, a music stand might be helpful. Some people who use wheelchairs may prefer to hold their material in their laps.

It is strongly advised that a single volunteer or staff person be available at all times to adjust the microphone(s) for each participant. An awkward height or angle can greatly hamper successful microphone use.

Lesson Review*(15 minutes)*

Distribute Session 3 *During the Presentation* handout and discuss its contents, including:

- When speaking in public, remember to breathe deeply and sit or stand upright and relaxed.
- Facing the audience with your head up and making eye contact helps to engage your audience.
- The more people listening, the slower you should talk.
- Treat your words as if each is a piece of gold.
- Pace yourself and remember to pause at important points for emphasis.

Participant Homework:*(5 minutes)*

- Each participant must meet with the facilitator and continue revising their story.
- **Before participants leave class**, make arrangements to work with each of them during the coming week, either in person, by phone, via computer, or whatever works best.
- Try to set meeting times with everyone before dismissing class.

Session 3 Facilitator Homework: Individual attention

This is the week when the facilitator needs to:

- ❖ Review what everyone has written up to this point.
- ❖ Ask for further developments, or additional information, or an edit to make the piece longer or shorter, etc.
- ❖ *The goal is to make sure that each participant has sufficient writing to advance to the tasks of Session 4, which include identifying which piece they want to use and beginning to think about presentation.*

Session 3

Detailed Activity Instructions

Session 3: How to Conduct the **Warm-Up Activity**

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Make sure every person, including all participants, volunteers and staff, is either seated or standing in a circle and facing each other.
2. Introduce this warm-up activity as a simple imitation activity. You go first. Decide on a movement, show it to the group, they reflect it back to you by imitating.
3. Everyone in the group has a chance to show/teach a movement to the others in the class, following the order in which they are seated.
4. Once everyone has participated, ask the group if anyone has other stretches or exercises they like to do when warming up for a presentation. Try them out with the group.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- **You will begin the movement-sharing process.**
 - Here are a few examples that may work with an OMOD group:
 - Give a “thumbs up” or Tap your foot
 - Make a fist and hold your arm up in the air
- **Once you share your gesture with the group, ask everyone in the group to repeat the gesture with you.**
 - If any participants are physically unable to replicate a gesture, it's not a problem. Encourage everyone to participate to the best of their ability. Accept any movement each person can offer.
- **Now ask the participant next to you to create their own gesture and encourage everyone in the group to repeat this new gesture.**
- Have everyone else in the circle complete the same process of creating their own gestures and repeating them in unison with the rest of the class.
- Once everyone else has contributed a simple gesture or movement, move onto the next activity.

NOTE: This activity helps group members to focus on each other, imitate movements, and remember each other's movements. These shared-focus skills will be integral to later collaborative work.

Session 3: Selecting the Story to Use for the Showcase

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Ask the participants to form groups of three and assign one volunteer or staff person for each group to facilitate this activity.
 - a. *Note:* By the third session, you may have a good idea of which participant(s) and assistant(s) work well with each other. In this case, you can determine potential groupings ahead of time and suggest them. This would also help to streamline the activity.
2. Make sure each participant has a copy of everything they have written so far in the workshop. By the start of the third session, this should include:
 - a. Session 1 Writing Exercise 1: *Free-Writing*
 - b. Session 1 Homework Assignment: Listen to Your World
 - c. Session 2 Writing Exercise 1: *First Impressions*
 - d. Session 2 Homework Assignment: Photographic Stories: Learning to *Describe*
3. Include any additional autobiographical writing they may have done independently or outside of class since the start of the workshop.
4. Tell the participants they will have 20 minutes to select the piece of writing they want to further develop for the showcase.
 - a. Emphasize this doesn't mean that only one of their stories is good enough to be in a showcase; it just means there is only enough time in the workshop to prepare one story for a public presentation in only three weeks. If anyone is unhappy about this, let them know they can always pursue one of their other stories independently, in a different writing course, or in a future OMOD class.
5. Once each of the small groups has rejoined the big class group, ask each participant to briefly (in a sentence or two) share what story they selected and why.

As the facilitator of this activity:

(Print this information and give to small group facilitators for clarification, as needed.)

➤ **Instructions for small group facilitators on how to guide the participants through this activity:**

- a. Have the first participant read each of their stories aloud to the group, or provide a brief summary of each piece of writing if the stories are long. Since most participants will have already heard all the stories read in class, a brief summary should suffice. “Brief summary” means a general idea of what the story is about.

For example:

- “My story is about my best friend and some of the crazy adventures we had.”
 - “My story is about a photo I took during a vacation with my dad and how that trip brought us closer together.”
 - “My story is about the weird sounds my neighbors make and why that reminds me of my childhood.”
- b. Ask which story they like best and why.
 - c. *Ask yourself:* is that your favorite story, too? Why or why not? What story do the other participants in the group like best? Here are some additional questions to consider when choosing a story:
 - **Is the story exciting?** Do you want to know what happens next? Or do you lose interest after a paragraph? Does it make you laugh? Is it moving?
 - **Is the story about the participant?** OMOD is for self-advocates to represent themselves and tell the audience who they are, so their experiences must be prominently featured in their story. For example, if the story is about a friend, family member, or girlfriend, they must include information about what that other person means to them, what they like or dislike about that person, why they’re talking about that person, and what their relationship with that person is like. If the participant’s story is a lengthy description about someone else or a pet, or a list of information about an activity they like to do, it will probably not make for a good showcase story unless they’re willing to include more about themselves in it.
 - **Is the story relatable?** Will it connect with an audience?

- **Does the story connect with another story the participant has written?**
Can it be combined with another story? For example, if the participant has several short pieces, and each is about a thing or a person they like and why, maybe they can string the different pieces together and present a story about what they like.
- d. Encourage the other participants to engage in the discussion. If they are uncertain about what to say, prompt them with some of the above questions.
- e. Once you have reached a consensus on which story the first participant would like to do, repeat the same process above with the other participants in your group. Keep an eye on time and rejoin the rest of the class after the 20 minutes is up.

NOTE: At the close of Session 3, you may have one or two participants who are still unsure about what story they would like to present. You might have someone with only one or two writings to choose from and they don't like either of them. Let those participants know that you will meet with them during the coming week to develop one of their stories, or create a new piece. Our OMOD commitment to writers is that everyone will have a story they are excited to share during the Showcase.

Session 3: How to Conduct **Relaxation and Breathing Exercises**

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Ask everyone, including participants, volunteers, and staff members, to stand, as they are able, in a circle facing each other.
2. Emphasize that each participant is only asked to complete the exercises to the best of their abilities. The idea here is to introduce the participants to movements they can use to energize or relax themselves before a presentation. This is in no way a competition.
3. Feel free to modify these exercises and/or add or eliminate exercises based on your specific group's strengths and limitations and how much time you may have allotted for this activity. Now that you have a better understanding of your group's abilities, you can probably eliminate some activities that feel inappropriate for your group.
4. **Lead the class in the following stretching, breathing, and relaxation exercises.**
 - a. Reach your arms as high as you possibly can.
 - b. Reach your arms down as low to the floor as possible.
 - c. Roll your head down in front of you and all the way around. Roll your head the other direction. Lean your head back as far as you can.
 - d. Try shoulder rolls. Lift your shoulders up and roll them forward. Now roll them backward.
 - e. Belly breathing. Hold your hands over your bellies and push your bellies out as you breathe in and out.
 - f. Take several deep breaths. Breathe in for at least five seconds, and then breathe out for at least five seconds.
 - g. Sing in a high tone and glide lower. Sing in a low tone and glide higher.
 - h. Say "Ho, ho, ho" like Santa Claus using the lowest, deepest voice possible.
 - i. Sing each vowel (A, E, I, O, U) loudly as a group and hold each note for as long as you possibly can.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- Ask the group if anyone has other stretches or exercises they like to do when warming up for a presentation.
- Try them out with the group.

Session 3: How to Conduct Vocal Warm-Ups**Here are the basic instructions for this activity:**

1. Ask the group to form a circle facing each other.
2. Ask the group if there is one participant who would be willing to offer one phrase or sentence from their story for the group to try delivering in several different voices. Ask them to pick something interesting or fun. *Examples of good phrases from OMOD stories include:*
 - a. A participant has a story in which he talks about going back to work after holiday. He exclaims, "Back to the grind!"
 - b. Another participant has a story about things he does and does not like. His first line is, "I like to dance!"
3. Once you have a sentence or phrase picked out, ask everyone in the circle to say it out loud together. Repeat it until the group can say the phrase in unison. (focus on diction and timing)
4. Now ask everyone to repeat the phrase in this variety of voices:
 - a. Loud (shouting)
 - b. Quiet (whispering)
 - c. Breathy (like Marilyn Monroe)
 - d. Raspy (like Tom Waits)
 - e. Slow
 - f. Fast
 - g. Angry
 - h. Excited
 - i. Withdrawn
5. Your group may also benefit from trying a few "tongue twisters." Offer one of the examples below
 - a. "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers."
 - b. "She sells seashells by the seashore."
 - c. Ask if any participants know a tongue twister that the group can use

As the facilitator of this activity:

- Ask the participants if there are any other vocal warm-ups they have found helpful in the past. Use these if you can.
- Keep this activity light hearted and inclusive.

Session 3: Read to Your Peers: Showcase Story

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Make sure the classroom is arranged so that all students and staff are oriented or facing a "stage" area with microphones.
2. **If possible, make the following three types of microphones available for the participants to try out:**
 - a. Lavalier "lav" (wireless lapel microphone)
 - b. Boom microphone (ball microphone on a standard microphone stand with boom attached)
 - c. Podium microphone (ball microphone attached to a podium)
 - d. **Note:** You can incorporate other types of microphones as well. The primary goal in this activity is for the participants to try a few different microphones and develop some familiarity, or basic understanding, of some different microphones they might encounter when doing public speaking in a variety of venues. Here are some other microphones you might try, if they are available:
 - Handheld ball microphone
 - Tabletop microphone
 - Headset microphone
3. Ask participants to take out their *OMOD Peer Performance Questions* handouts. Bring extra copies to distribute in case anyone misplaced theirs. Read over the worksheet again for review.
4. Invite the participants to come up and read the first few lines of their stories using the different microphones. Ask them to read just one line at each microphone. If no one volunteers to present first, simply call one person at a time to come up and present.
5. After each participant delivers a few lines using the microphones microphone, offer feedback utilizing the *OMOD Peer Performance Questions*. Encourage the other participants and assistants to do the same.
6. You have 30-45 minutes for this activity. If you begin to run out of time, prioritize giving everyone a chance to work with the microphones. You may need to limit feedback from peers so that everyone has practice with the equipment.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- **It is important for the facilitator to recognize which microphone setup will work best for each participant.** Experiment with each person, allowing the full range of options, and *decide together* which works best. People who use augmentative communication devices may amplify the device with a boom mic or by plugging the devices directly into a public address (PA) system or separate set of speakers.
- **Determine the best possible placement of any written materials that the participants will need to successfully present their stories.** For those using a boom or lavalier microphone, a music stand might be helpful. Some people who use wheelchairs may prefer to hold their material in their laps.
- **It is strongly advised that a single volunteer or staff person be available at all times to adjust the microphone(s) for each participant.** An awkward height or angle can greatly hamper successful microphone use.

NOTE: This activity has two important elements: they read from the stories they will present in the Showcase and each person gets the opportunity to work with microphones. Both activities are designed to help OMOD participants begin to imagine the performance aspect of sharing their stories and become accustomed to audio equipment.

Session 3

Handouts

Session 3 Handout

Presentation Warm-Up Exercises

Before you begin your presentation, it is important to relax and warm up your voice and body. Even seasoned speakers experience stage fright. Warm-up exercises serve the double purpose of calming your nerves and preparing your body and your voice for the best possible delivery of your story. Any or all of these exercises may be helpful. Try them and see which ones are most useful to you.

Body Warm-Ups

- **A good way to relax and loosen up your body is to stretch! Here are a few simple stretches you can try:**
 - Reach your arms as high as you possibly can.
 - Reach your arms down as low to the floor as possible.
 - Roll your head down in front of you and all the way around. Roll your head the other direction. Lean your head back as far as you can.
 - Do shoulder rolls. Lift your shoulders up and roll them forward. Then roll them backward.
- **Breathing exercises can also be useful for relaxing and coping with stage fright. Two common breathing exercises include:**
 - Belly breathing. Hold your hands over your bellies and push your bellies out as you breathe in and out.
 - Deep breathing. Take several deep breaths. Breathe in for at least five seconds, and then breathe out for at least five seconds.

Vocal Warm-Ups

- **Vocal warm-up exercises may feel silly, but they are effective at loosening your vocal cords. Doing just one or two of the following exercises before your presentation can help to make your speech clear.**
 - Sing in a high tone and glide lower. Sing in a low tone and glide higher.
 - Say “Ho, ho, ho” like Santa Claus using the lowest, deepest voice possible.
 - Sing each vowel (A, E, I, O, U) loudly and hold each note for as long as you possibly can.
 - Count from 20 to 30 and back down in a “proper English accent.”

Session 3 Handout**During the Presentation**

- **Remember that your body tells the audience how you feel.**

If you can stand, remember to stand up as straight as you can and face the audience. If you are seated, be sure that your posture in the chair is as upright as you can manage, that your body is stable and comfortable, and oriented toward the people in the audience.

- **Relax. Take several deep breaths before starting your presentation.**

This helps you focus on what you are about to do, slows your heart rate down to help you get calm, and signals people that you are ready.

- **Speak slowly and clearly. Project your voice.**

Speaking slowly helps you to speak more clearly and gives your audience a chance to get accustomed to your voice and style of speaking. Projecting helps your words be heard, and it also lets the audience know that you really want their attention.

- **Pause at appropriate places.** Give your words time to sink in!

- **Make eye contact with your audience members.**

Or just stare at their foreheads - they will not notice the difference – either way, they will think you are interested in connecting with them.

- **Never apologize!** If you make a mistake, just keep going.

- **Smile. Be yourself.** You are beautiful just as you are. They will love you.

REMEMBER:
If you have fun, they will too!



Session 4

Committing to Your Story

Session 4

Committing to Your Story

Prior to Session 4

- Ensure that the following equipment/supplies are available and in working condition:
 - Lavalier (wireless lapel microphone), boom, and podium microphones with amplifiers.
 - Timing device to time each presentation.
 - (Optional) Video and/or Audio Recording equipment to record presentations.
 - Sufficient number of handouts ready for distribution. (*Find the “Power Punches” Prepare, Prepare, Prepare and Mirror, Mirror on the Wall*)
- Ensure that a volunteer or staff person is available to adjust the microphone for each participant and record presentations when appropriate.

Learning Objectives

- *Participants will identify the “power punches” in their stories and learn how to emphasize them through pacing, inflection, and voice volume.*
- *Participants will learn how to read their stories to discover which parts are awkward when spoken and what words might be difficult to pronounce, etc.*
- *Participants will make sure that their stories have recognizable messages and that each message suits the individual writer.*

Session 4 Schedule

- **Warm-Up Activity** (10 minutes)
- **Writing Exercise: Find the “Power Punches”** (45 minutes)
- **Break** (15 minutes)
- **Audience Etiquette** (10 minutes)
- **Read to Your Peers: *Showcase Story*** (30-45 minutes)
- **Lesson Review** (10 minutes)
- **PARTICIPANT Homework** (5 minutes)



Session 4

Workshop Activities

Warm-Up Activity*(15 minutes)*

Invite the participants to complete the following warm-ups to the best of their ability. If any participants cannot comfortably participate in one or more of these activities, consider revising or dropping the activity:

- A-E-I-O-U: Participants will make each vowel sound and sustain the sound for as long as they can.
- Head and neck stretches
- Counting from 20 to 30 and back in a “proper English accent.”

Writing Exercise: Find the “Power Punches”*(45 minutes)*

- **Distribute the *Find the “Power Punches”* handout** and invite the participants to form small groups of 2 to 3 to read their stories aloud.
- Assign a volunteer facilitator for each group.
- Instruct the members of the group to help each other identify which sentences, words, and phrases have the most power.
- Have them make notes of what strikes them as a listener or what captures their attention.
- **Encourage each participant to identify at least two “power punches” per story.**
- The end goal of this exercise is to identify what’s powerful about each piece, as a way to help the writer add emphasis to increase the story’s effectiveness. Explain that figuring out what’s powerful helps to determine what the meaning, or “point,” is.
- **Before the break, ask everyone to identify their “power punches” to their peers.**

Break*(15 minutes)*

Audience Etiquette*(10 minutes)*

Before the first run-through of presentations, initiate a large group discussion of proper audience etiquette during the showcase. Some examples:

- Audience members should silence their phones and refrain from talking, texting or shuffling papers.
- Do not interrupt the presentation in any way.
- Laughing, cheering, and clapping is okay as long as it is appropriate, as in laughing at a humorous moment in the story or applauding a particular idea expressed.
- Give your full attention to the speaker.

Read to Your Peers: Showcase Story ***(30-45 minutes)*

Review the “OMOD Peer Performance Questions” handout and instruct them on how to note strengths and possible areas of improvement in their peer’s performance. (See “OMOD Peer Performance Questions in Session 2)

Using their preferred microphone setup, invite each participant to present his or her story to the class and time each presentation to see if any cuts or additions should be made to the stories. Stories should be between 4 and 6 minutes in length.

Note: Be sure to identify any technical aspects (i.e. microphone setup (height, angle, type), PA (sound quality, volume, unintentional feedback), written materials (font, type-size, location, etc.) that may need to be changed.

At the conclusion of each presentation, take time for peers to offer constructive feedback.

Optional: Whenever possible, video or audio record these presentations and play them back to the speaker for self-evaluation and review.

****This is the most important activity in Session 4, so be sure to start no later than the midpoint of the class. If necessary, shorten one of the other activities, just not this one.**

Lesson Review*(10 minutes)*

Distribute the “Prepare, Prepare, Prepare” Handout and prompt a group discussion with the following questions:

- How did you feel presenting your story to the class?
- What worked with the microphones, and what was difficult?
- What feedback/comments did you receive?
- What should you work on and practice more?

And, remember to practice often and ask for constructive feedback from your friends, family, or peers.

Participant Homework:*(5 minutes)*

Distribute the homework assignment “Mirror, Mirror On The Wall” Handout and encourage participants to practice reading their stories aloud in front of a mirror at least once every day. **Any edits that need to be made should be made before Session 5 begins.**

Facilitator Homework: This week you have a lot of work to do to prepare for Session 5. You will find “Note for facilitators at the close of Session 4” after the Session 4 handouts. The “Note” details exactly what you need to do in order to ensure that you and the participants are ready for a productive Session 5. The coaching handouts you’ll need for Session 5 are also provided.



Session 4

Detailed Activity Instructions

Session 4: How to conduct the Warm-Up Activity**Here are the basic instructions for this activity:**

1. Ask everyone, including participants, volunteers and staff members, to stand, as they are able, in a circle facing each other.
2. Lead the class in the following warm-up exercises. Some of these will be familiar to the participants from earlier sessions. If you know that any participants cannot comfortably participate in one or more of these exercises, consider revising or dropping those activities.
 - a. Sing each vowel (A, E, I, O, U) loudly as a group and hold, or sustain, each note for as long as you possibly can.
 - b. Roll your head down in front of you and all the way around. Roll your head the other direction. Lean your head back as far as you can.
 - c. Try shoulder rolls. Lift your shoulders up and roll them forward. Now roll them backward.
 - d. Count from 20 to 30 and back down in a "proper English accent."
 - i. (*Note:* You will need to demonstrate this first for the participants. Or you can ask the group if anyone can do a good proper English accent, and if someone volunteers, have that person demonstrate for the class instead. The English accent is less important than the clear pronunciation of every syllable.)

As the facilitator of this activity:

- Do your best to keep this upbeat and fun.
- Remind participants that this will help them speak clearly when they share their stories.

Session 4

Handouts

Session 4 Handout

Find the “Power Punches”

A “power punch” in your story can be:

- **a passage written with emotion** that the audience can relate to
- specific details, **meaningful descriptions that help your audience “feel”** what you are saying
- **words that provide listener with insight** into who you are
- the part of your story that **people will remember**
- **a fascinating first line** of your story

Now that you’ve got your story, it’s time for you to begin getting comfortable with reading and performing it.

- ✓ Read your story out loud, line by line, at least twice each day to get the “feel” of what you’ve written.
- ✓ Start looking for sentences in your story that you could make into “power punch” moments.

Three ways to bring out the power punches in your stories:

1. Add some detail to give us more information

Instead of “I wasn’t like the other kids.”

Try: “I was born with one eye that didn’t form. I learned how to take my “fake eye” out when I had a class I didn’t like, like math or science. It was a real attention-getter.”

2. Say what people won’t usually say out loud:

“When people stare at me and my boyfriend in the mall, I want to ask them, ‘What are you looking at?’ You’ve never seen two people with disabilities before?”

3. Find the power punch moments are “hiding” in your story.

Instead of: “I got stuck with the job of mopping the floor.”

Ask yourself: Why? How did that feel? What’s wrong with that job?

Try: “I volunteered to help with the clean up crew, and I did so well that I got stuck, permanently, with the job of the mopping the floor. But it’s not a bad thing because I just got a job mopping floors at night, and now I have my own money.”

Session 4 Handout

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

- Practice your speech out loud 3-4 times a day.
- Practice in the shower or in front of a mirror.
- Videotape yourself or ask your friends or family to listen and offer you feedback.
- Pay attention to how fast you speak. Slow down if necessary.
- Remember, you want your audience to hear every word.
- If you can, memorize key parts or the general order of your story.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before your presentation.

Session 4

Participant Homework

Session 4 Participant Homework Assignment:

Mirror, Mirror On The Wall...

Now that you have a complete draft of your story, the next step is to practice reading your story out loud everyday – or as often as you can. Here's a technique to help you remember your body and feel more confident when presenting your story:

The Mirror Technique

Stand, or sit as upright as you possibly can, in front of a mirror (the bigger, the better). Take a deep breath and face the mirror confidently. Smile and read your story.

Remember to speak slowly and clearly. Project your voice as though you are speaking to a room full of people and look up frequently to engage your imaginary audience.

If using a mirror is difficult for you, then try presenting your story to a friend or family member OR make an audio or video recording of yourself reading your story and listen back or watch yourself. Many phones and computers have some kind of recording technology, so take advantage of it if you can!

The mirror technique can be a huge confidence builder, **and if you do this every day, you can't help but to engage your audience when the showcase finally rolls around.**

In addition, repeating your story every day will help you to memorize your story. You don't need to know it word-for-word, but you should be as familiar with your story as possible.

NOTE FOR FACILITATORS at the close of Session 4:

You have **two big tasks to complete** before next week's Session 5 workshop. **Ask your volunteers to help if you need assistance.**

Task Number One: Prepare an order-of-the-show for the Showcase

- **Make sure you have a readable copy of the story each person will use**, and in its most recent version.
- If the story still needs development, **make an appointment to work with individuals, or groups who have ensemble pieces, during the week** (in person, by phone, email, etc.) to get the story ready for practice during Session 5.
- **Prepare a show lineup to use in Session 5:** "Generating Draft of Showcase Lineup" in the OMOD Teaching Resources section of this manual, will provide some strategies and ideas for arranging the stories your participants have written into a coherent presentation with a theme and a message.
 - **Note about changes to stories:** Try not to make any substantive changes in anyone's writing after Session 4. Session 5 is the only opportunity for participants to practice with their peers and get feedback, and changes at the last minute are rarely effectively incorporated into a performance.
- **PRINT** the showcase lineup and give it to participants to review while you present it to the group. Be prepared for lots of questions.

Task Number Two: Prepare individual coaching notes for use during Session 5

- **You need to prepare 3 documents per participant for Session 5 Coaching:**
 - a copy of the story for the participant (in whatever format is best for them)
 - a reading copy for the Session 5 coach who will work with that participant
 - the individual coaching form for each person, with your comments (see coaching template and example form)
- See "*Coaching Performance with OMOD Participants*" on the next page for information on how to coach from page to stage.

Coaching Handout for Use by Session 5 Coaches**COACHING PERFORMANCE with OMOD PARTICIPANTS**

In OMOD, coaching and “editing” are part of the same process. “Editing” is collaborative process in these workshops, no red pencils here. And “coaching” can also include suggesting revisions to the piece. It’s a fairly painless flow once you know it.

Much of the time, coaching involves **actively listening** that leads to **imagining a “Best Story.”** A “best story” is one that is understandable to the audience, expresses exactly what the participant intended to say and is presented well enough to make their point. The same story can be a “best story” one day and a not-so-good story the next, depending on delivery.

A good coach should:

- identify the **places in the story that have the most impact** (collaboration w/writer)
- **understand what “the feel” of the piece is** (funny, poignant, confrontational, sad)
- look for **places where the story needs more detail** in order to be understandable
- think about organization of the story and how it impacts intended meaning
- know the personal investment of the writer (Does the writer care about this story?)

Imagine:

- ✓ Ways to improve the story by sharpening delivery (hitting the power punches)
- ✓ Ways for the story to come alive through use of voice, intonation, pauses, facial expression, gestures, movement (remember the body!)

ALWAYS:

- ❖ **Be supportive:** no room for negativity on any level
- ❖ Look for **changes participants are willing to make**
- ❖ **Respect the story,** make suggestions, don’t take over!
- ❖ **Remember: Nothing is ever perfect and nothing ever needs to be!**

COACHING Template: author/title

Date: _____

Coach: Read these instructions, then ask the writer to read the latest draft of the showcase story. Use your Reading Draft to follow along and make notes. Participant reads through the piece at least twice during the workshop. Give your feedback after the second reading and discuss changes that might improve the piece. List issues that arose during the reading in the space below so facilitator can support her best performance.

PLEASE TIME the 2nd Reading. Should be under 5 minutes. **Time:** _____

You will have approximately 45 minutes for the coaching session.

- ✓ **Power Punches: Listen for which parts of the piece have the most energy:** where the writer makes you laugh, or creates a lively connection with you, or poses a compelling question. *Mark those things on your draft to review with your writer once the reading is finished.*
- ✓ **Pay attention to moments** when the writer has difficulty with the wording, the wording might need to change. Also, pay attention to the parts that are really good, and give that feedback as well.
- ✓ **Think about these parts of performance:** Voice volume, posture, speed of speaking, eye contact. Do any of these need work?

Once you have given your feedback, ask the writer to read it again, incorporating and responding to your suggestions.

Discuss: How might participant *use body movement or pauses or other small performance tools* (slowing down before important words, raising or lowering volume, speeding up tense parts of the piece) to enhance delivery?

_____: (facilitator comments here)
Facilitator's name

-
-
-

What else came up during the coaching activity: (Session 5 coach comments here)

Coach: _____

EXAMPLE: COACHING INSTRUCTIONS: 4/2016 JM London

Date Writer Title

Coach: Read these instructions, then ask the writer to read through the latest draft of the showcase story. Use **your Reading Draft** to follow along. Participant reads through the piece at least twice during the workshop. Give your feedback after the second reading and discuss changes that might improve the piece. List issues that arose during the reading in the space below so facilitator can support her best performance.

PLEASE TIME the 2nd Reading. Should be under 5 minutes. Time: _____

You will have approximately 45 minutes for the coaching session.

- ✓ **Power Punches: Listen for which parts of the piece have the most energy:** where the writer makes you laugh, or creates a lively connection with you, or poses a compelling question. *Mark those things on your draft to review with your writer once the reading is finished.*
- ✓ **Pay attention to moments** when the writer has difficulty with the wording, the wording might need to change. Also, pay attention to the parts that are really good, and give that feedback as well.
- ✓ **Think about these parts of performance:** Voice volume, posture, speed of speaking, eye contact. Do any of these need work?

Once you have given your feedback, ask the writer to read it again, incorporating and responding to your suggestions.

Discuss: How might participant *use body movement or pauses or other small performance tools* (slowing down before important words, raising or lowering volume, speeding up tense parts of the piece) to enhance delivery?

Participant name: (facilitator comments, prepared before Session 5)

- Think about making and sustaining eye contact briefly with audience.
- Check your rate of speech; you tend to read slowly.
 - Pick a paragraph and practice consciously reading more quickly. How does that feel? Could you do it for part of the piece? All of it?

What else came up during the coaching activity: (Session 5 coach comments)

- *trouble pronouncing a few words; we changed the words*
- *had trouble with stand mic, so practiced with lavalier; seems to work better*
- *didn't change her voice for the funny parts; practiced changing the tone of her voice and those parts were funnier*

Coach:



Session 5

One-one-One Coaching Practice

Session 5

One-on-One Coaching and Practice

Prior to Session 5

- Prepare individual coaching notes for each participant (use template).
- Ensure that there are enough volunteer coaches to give each person individual attention, whether 1:1 or in a small group.
- Ensure that the following equipment/supplies are available and in working condition:
 - Lavalier, boom, and podium microphones with amplifiers.
 - (Optional) Video recording equipment to record presentations.
 - Sufficient number of handouts ready for distribution.

Learning Objectives

- *Participants will work to improve certain areas of their delivery that they identify as most important, with input from workshop facilitators and peers.*
- *Participants will learn the value of filming and reviewing their speeches on video.*

Session 5 Schedule

- **Warm-Up Activity** *(15 minutes)*
- **One-on-One Coaching** *(1 hour)*
 - (Optional) **Video Coaching:** If video resources are available, this activity may run concurrently with One-on-One Coaching.
- **Break** *(15 minutes)*
- **Review Audience Etiquette** *(5 minutes)*
- **Run-Through of Showcase Presentations** *(1 hour)*
 - **Alternative:** If the Video Coaching activity is possible, this real-time run-through can be replaced with a screening of the videos.
- **Review** *(10 minutes)*

Session 5

Workshop Activities

Warm-Up Activity:*(15 minutes)*

Lead the participants in a series of brief warm-up exercises. The group has tried a number of stretching, relaxation, breathing, and vocal exercises in the previous four sessions. Choose several vocal and/or other exercises the group has found most useful or pertinent for today's warm-up and lead the class through those exercises in an order of your choice. *(Refer to the step-by-step activity instructions at the end of this section for a complete list of possible warm-up exercises.)*

One-on-One Coaching:*(1 hour)*

For this session to run effectively, there must be at least one volunteer, staff person, or other helper available to work with each participant. Participants will work individually with volunteers and program staff. Instruct each volunteer and program staff person to follow coaching notes specific to the participant he or she is working with.

Distribute the Session 5 individualized coaching notes prepared by the workshop facilitator. Focus on aspects of delivery: pronunciation, eye contact, pacing, body posture, power language, and other issues specific to each individual. Encourage the coaches to go over the Facilitator comments and add their own as indicated. One-on-one coaching can run longer or shorter at your discretion and depending on how many people are in the group.

(Refer to Coaching Performance with OMOD Participants for additional information on coaching and a template for individualized coaching notes.)

(Optional) Video Coaching:*(1 hour)*

Using the same order as the showcase lineup, participants will go to another location outside the classroom to be filmed presenting their stories. *(Refer to Video Coaching in the Appendix for detailed instructions on how to best incorporate this activity in Session 5.)*

Break*(15 minutes)***Review Audience Etiquette***(5 minutes)*

Before viewing the videos, the instructor will reiterate key points from the previous session's discussion on proper audience etiquette. For example: refrain from talking or texting; silence your phone, texting; give full attention to speaker, etc.

Run-Through of Showcase Presentations: (1 hour)

If video resources were not available for the optional *Video Coaching* activity, simply stage the showcase presentations following the showcase lineup. After each presentation, allow a few minutes for the class to discuss general observations of each presentation and note the specific strengths and areas of improvement that each participant should focus on during the next week before the showcase.

ALTERNATIVE: View and discuss video-recorded presentations using the same guidelines for feedback as above. (Refer to *Video Coaching* in the Appendix.)

Review: (10 minutes)

Ask the participants how they are feeling about their stories, their presentations, and any other concerns they might have. Ask if anyone has any questions or concerns about the upcoming showcase. If any participants feel nervous about the upcoming showcase, offer tips about how to cope with stage fright.

Distribute the “Presentation Day” handout and review its contents to ensure all participants understand each item.

NOTE: You may want to show “*Tips on Public Speaking*” video on the VSATEXAS YouTube Channel (Link: <https://youtu.be/pYyIGbe7vgY>) to help reduce presentation jitters and stress.

FACILITATOR HOMEWORK: After Session 5, you are responsible for putting the script together.

After Session 5:

- Arrange the stories in their final order for the showcase.
- As soon as you can, get the lineup/show order to the participants so that they can begin to know who precedes and who follows them.
 - ❖ The more time participants have to learn the order of the show and notice their turn to speak, the easier it will be for them to follow the order during the Showcase.
- **Create a SCRIPT**, with each piece in order of the show and notes on any AV materials used.
- **PRINT Scripts (6)**
 - ❖ one script for yourself
 - ❖ 1 script for ASL interpreter if needed
 - ❖ 1 script for person who runs any visuals or music
 - ❖ 2 extra scripts in case people need them during rehearsal
 - ❖ 1 script that stays at the podium for participants to refer to if needed

Session 5

Detailed Activity Instructions

Session 5: How to Conduct the Warm-up Activity

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Ask everyone, including participants, volunteers and staff members, to stand, as they are able, in a circle facing each other.
2. By this session, the group will have tried a number of stretching, relaxation, breathing, and vocal exercises.
3. Choose 2-3 vocal and/or other exercises from the list below that the group finds most useful or pertinent for today's warm-up.
4. **Lead the class in a series of brief warm-up exercises in an order of your choice:**
 - a. Sing each vowel (A, E, I, O, U) loudly as a group and hold, or sustain, each note for as long as you possibly can.
 - b. Roll your head down in front of you and all the way around. Roll your head the other direction. Lean your head back as far as you can.
 - c. Try shoulder rolls. Lift your shoulders up and roll them forward. Now roll them backward.
 - d. Count from 20 to 30 and back down in a "proper English accent."
 - e. Try a few tongue twisters. Offer some examples and then ask for suggestions from the participants. Here are some common tongue twisters:
 - i. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
 - ii. She sells seashells by the seashore.
 - f. Reach your arms as high as you possibly can.
 - g. Reach your arms down as low to the floor as possible.
 - h. Belly breathing. Hold your hands over your bellies and push your bellies out as you breathe in and out.
 - i. Take several deep breaths. Breathe in for at least five seconds, and then breathe out for at least five seconds.
 - j. Say "Ho, ho, ho" like Santa Claus using the lowest, deepest voice possible.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- Modify these exercises as needed to fit the abilities of your participants.



Session 5 Handouts

Presentation Day

Session 5 Handout

Presentation Day

- ♥ Exercise! Walking or moving your body for 30 minutes can help ease tension.
- ♥ Hydrate! Drink plenty of water and/or orange or grapefruit juice. Avoid caffeine.
- ♥ Laugh. Watch a funny video to relax your mind.
- ♥ Meditate for 15-20 minutes in a chair with your eyes closed.
- ♥ Think about what you will wear! Wear comfortable, professional clothing. Remember: with a clip-on microphone, you will need to have a belt or pocket to hold the “belt pack” transmitter.

Session 6

Rehearsal and Delivery of Showcase

Session 6

Rehearsal and Delivery of Showcase

Prior to Session 6

- Review OMOD Showcase Checklist and how to use it, at the end of Session 6
- Ensure that the following equipment/supplies are available and in working condition:
 - Lavalier (wireless lapel microphone), boom, and podium microphones with amplifiers.
 - (Optional) Recording equipment to record presentations.
 - Sufficient number of evaluation sheets ready for distribution.
- An adequate number of volunteers or staff personnel are available to assist each participant.
- If an emcee will be used, ensure that the emcee has an accurate list of the sequence of presenters, can pronounce each participant's name correctly.

Learning Objectives

- *Participants will learn how to rehearse and prepare for a showcase.*
- *Participants will practice presenting to a live audience.*
- *Participants will present before a small audience of family and friends.*

Session 6 Schedule

- **Warm-Up Activity** *(10 minutes)*
- **Review of Public Speaking Tips** *(10 minutes)*
- **Rehearsal** *(30 minutes)*
- **Practice in Pairs** *(40 minutes)*
- **Showcase** *(1 hour)*

Session 6

Workshop Activities

Warm-Up Activity:*(10 minutes)*

Lead the participants in performing the warm up. Encourage each participant to complete the exercises to the best of his or her ability:

- Shoulder rolls
- Belly breathing
- Yawning
- High to low pitch voice glides

Review of Public Speaking Tips:*(10 minutes)*

Review the public speaking tips in *During the Presentation* handout (Session 3) including:

- make eye contact
- pronunciation
- pacing and
- projection

Remind participants to pause at specific poignant moments in their stories. Make sure those moments are clearly marked on their written materials, if not already.

Remind the participants that if they are able to get their personal messages across to the audience, they may be able to open the minds of their audience about who they are. And, open minds can open doors for everyone.

Rehearsal:*(30 minutes)*

This will be a brief cue-to-cue run-through of the order of speakers, and their positions on stage, as well as the microphone setups that will be used.

- A cue-to-cue rehearsal means each participant will move to the microphone, wait for the microphone to be adjusted, present the first and last lines from their story, and move back to their seat.
- Take time to rehearse the ending piece of the show, and the exit from the stage.

The rehearsal will be the last chance to correct any technical issues, especially those regarding the microphones and the PA. This run-through will also be helpful for the participants to grow more comfortable with the speaking order and where they fit into the lineup.

Practice in Pairs:*(40 minutes)*

Invite participants to form groups of two and practice their presentations until 10 minutes before the showcase begins.

Alternative: Do a run-through of the entire script, with all participants, if you have time.

Showcase:*(1 hour)*

- Determine where participants will gather for their entrance and assign a helper to make sure that everyone is ready at start time.
- Get A/V personnel in place a few minutes before start time
- An emcee is recommended to introduce the program, explain the class process, introduce each participant, and offer closing words at the end of the showcase.
- ENJOY!

Session 6

Detailed Activity Instructions

Session 6: How to Conduct the Warm Up Activity

Here are the basic instructions for this activity:

1. Ask everyone, including participants, volunteers and staff members, to stand, as they are able, in a circle facing each other.
2. Lead the group in the following warm-up exercises:
 - a. Sing each vowel (A, E, I, O, U) loudly as a group and hold, or sustain, each note for as long as you possibly can.
 - b. Try shoulder rolls. Lift your shoulders up and roll them forward. Now roll them backward.
 - c. Belly breathing. Hold your hands over your bellies and push your bellies out as you breathe in and out.
 - d. Yawn as loudly as possible.

As the facilitator of this activity:

- It's Showcase time! Today's warm-up activity is the "real deal." Spend a few minutes extra working on these.
- Ask the participants to suggest other warm-ups (from earlier classes)
- Have fun with this! Take a minute to encourage each one of your participants.

Session 6

Showcase Checklist & Instructions

How to Use the OMOD Showcase Checklist

- Showcase Lineup
 - Did all participants receive the showcase lineup during Session 5? If not, allot time to review the showcase lineup with these participants.
 - Are all participants familiar with and confident about the showcase lineup?
 - Was there anyone who struggled with remembering the lineup? If so, either assign an assistant to that participant to prompt them offstage when it is that participant's time to move to the stage area OR find some time to give that participant some extra practice with the order of speakers.
- Scripts
 - Do all participants have a copy of their script in their preferred font, type size, and line spacing? Each participant's script can be included in a large binder with everyone else's scripts that stays on a music stand that everyone shares, or each participant can hang onto his/her own script, depending on personal preference. A few participants may even have their stories memorized, in which case problem solved!
 - If you decide to utilize a large binder with everyone's scripts included, make sure this is placed on a music stand or podium stand (if all class participants can stand and prefer to use a podium) that everyone feels comfortable reading from.
 - Assign a staff person to adjust the music stand to a comfortable height for each participant. If all participants can comfortably read their scripts with the music stand at the same height as everyone else, then you don't need to assign a staff person; the less adjustment needed for each speaker, the better, as any frequent adjustments can be distracting for the audience.

- Blocking
 - Entrance: do all participants know how they will enter the showcase room and move to the stage area?
 - Seating during showcase: do all participants know where they will sit during their peers' presentations?
 - Transitions between speakers: are all participants familiar with the process of approaching the microphone and returning to their seats?
 - Bow/exit: are all participants familiar with the final group bow and exit from the stage area and/or showcase room?
- Microphones
 - Do you have a staff person assigned to adjust microphone and/or music (for scripts) stands, switch microphones between participants?
 - Do you have a staff person assigned to monitor volume levels on PA?
 - Are all microphones working properly? (Note: if any microphones pose technical issues during the rehearsal, see if you can replace them or instead rely on just one or two reliable microphones that you are more confident in.)
- Media
 - Is all necessary visual media equipment (projector, screen, speakers, cords, adaptors, laptop computer, PowerPoint or other slideshow presentation files, etc.) functioning properly?
 - Do you have a staff person assigned to advance slides or other media during the showcase?
 - Does this staff person have a copy of the full showcase script or at least a list of the cues for advancing the slides and other media?

- Audience
 - Do you have plenty of seating oriented towards the stage for the audience? You will need a capacity for at least 50 people and be sure to leave a few spaces open for audience members using wheelchairs. Make sure the audience seating does not prevent wheelchair access to and from the stage area.
 - Do you have a showcase program, or simply an “Order of Show” with speaker names and story titles?
- Information Table
 - Do you have a table established with program information and evaluations available for audience members? There are so many people who can benefit from participating in OMOD workshops, so each showcase is an opportunity to spread the word and widen your network of participants and/or conference speakers. Program information may include any or all of the following (examples of each of these forms are available on the OMOD website):
 - Brochures
 - Business cards
 - Sign-up sheet to receive information on future workshop and showcase opportunities (name, email, phone, mailing address)
 - Audience evaluations, or feedback forms, to determine the success the showcase and gather potential ways to improve future showcases

OMOD Showcase Checklist

☐ **Showcase Lineup**

Notes:

☐ **Scripts**

Notes:

☐ **Blocking**

- ☐ Entrance
- ☐ Seating during Showcase
- ☐ Transitions between speakers
- ☐ Group bow/exit

Notes:

☐ **Microphones**

- ☐ Working properly
- ☐ Staff person assigned to adjust mic(s) between speakers
- ☐ Staff person assigned to monitor volume levels on PA

Notes:

☐ **Media**

- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Projector
- ☐ Screen
- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Speakers
- ☐ Cords & adaptors
- ☐ Media files
- ☐ Working properly
- ☐ Staff person assigned to advance or cue media
- ☐ Script, or list of cues, for media staff person

Notes:

☐ **Audience**

- ☐ Seating for 50 people, including spaces for wheelchair users
- ☐ Accessible path to stage
- ☐ Showcase program OR “Order of Show”

Notes:

☐ **Information Table**

- ☐ Table with program information available for the audience.

Materials may include any or all of the following:

- ☐ Showcase program OR “Order of Show”
- ☐ Brochures
- ☐ Business Cards
- ☐ Sign up sheet for receiving future updates
- ☐ Audience evaluations, or feedback forms

Notes:

OMOD TEACHING RESOURCES



OMOD and the Ethic of Accommodation

VSA Texas promotes an “ethic of accommodation” that is aimed at providing appropriate accommodations while still encouraging maximum independence in every step of the process. What constitutes an “appropriate accommodation” will differ for each person and “independence” is highly individualized.

As you begin your work as an OMOD workshop facilitator, you will need to know how to provide accommodations, and when and how to ask for and support a participant’s maximum independence. Because there is often an emotional response to asking for, or using, accommodations, it is up to the facilitator to develop a safe context in which the participant can consider the available options.

- Before you offer to provide an accommodation, *Ask First!*
- Keep in mind the push/pull between asking for maximum independence and offering/supporting accommodations. It’s rarely simple to strike that balance.

Three Categories of Accommodation: Physical, Cognitive, Social

Physical Accommodation: Be aware of the need for physical accommodations, which can be as simple as modifying a podium or offering an alternative microphone. Any of the following common accommodations need to be available to OMOD participants.

Common physical accommodations:

- Arranging the physical environment to make it easy for a person who uses a walker or wheelchair to access a table or the stage.
- Finding a “scribe” to write down the story for a person who cannot physically write.
- Accommodating needs for physical breaks, or providing assistance with mobility, bathroom breaks, etc., when appropriate.
- Providing a clip-on lavalier microphone for a speaker who cannot hold or otherwise use a standard microphone

To Evaluate whether an OMOD participant might benefit from a physical accommodation:

- **Is the person able to independently move through the environment, using accommodations they use every day** (wheelchair, forearm supports, scooter, cane, walker, etc.), **or without accommodation?**
- Ask about mobility on temporary ramps (present in many conference speaking venues). *Plan around the mobility limitations of each participant.*
 - Some people who use wheelchairs for mobility can walk a few feet, or can stand to do a presentation in front of a podium. Don't assume that the wheelchair means that they are always "wheelchair bound." *Ask them!*
 - Feel free to use an activity during the first or second class session that will *explore what each person can physically do.*
 - Be careful not to over-assist. Don't assume what someone can and cannot do. **Always ask first.**

What NOT to do:

- *Don't insist on a physical accommodation.* It's up to the person to decide whether to use any accommodation.
- *Avoid suggesting an accommodation while in a group setting.* Try to always ask the participant in private.
- *Unless requested, don't offer your opinion about what the person currently uses as accommodation.* Deciding on which devices or supports to use is a complicated process and OMOD facilitators should be respectful of the person's decision.

Cognitive Skill Accommodation: Each of us has strengths and needs when it comes to what we are capable of doing. OMOD recognizes the need to modify the demands of the writing workshop to accommodate to each person's particular strengths and needs.

How to determine whether an OMOD participant might benefit from modifying the demands of the writing workshop:

- **Is the participant readily participating in the writing session of the workshop?**

- When participants don't know how to start the writing process, or how to relay their story, you may see stalling, inattention, talking with others, etc.
- If you see these behaviors, you will need to interact individually with that participant and determine what the issue is.
 - Ask what's happening.
 - Sometimes difficulty with handwriting is the problem.
 - Ask them what they need. Then try to provide it.
 - A volunteer scribe could write down what they say, or it could be recorded for later transcription.

Ask questions:

- Do you need help deciding on what to write?
- Do you need help writing it? Offer alternatives for generating a story.
- If a participant can't get started on the prompt that has been given, ask him or her to remember a powerful memory, or to talk about something that happened to them that made them have strong feelings. These make good conference stories.
- Accept anything they offer as their "story." The point is to get them started, not to critique the content.

➤ **If a person has difficulty writing (in terms of generating the sentences and expressing ideas), it may be necessary for someone to ask him or her questions about the story they want to tell and then write it down.**

- Writers who have difficulty organizing their thoughts on paper will sometimes come back from the 15 minute writing session with disorganized written notes, or multiple unsuccessful attempts to start a story. That's your cue as facilitator to modify the expectation so this person can succeed.
- For people who cannot write easily, sometimes the story needs to be generated verbally, perhaps as a conversation, and then produced in written form by the facilitator or volunteer.
- The conversation can be recorded and then transcribed, or hand-written

➤ **Sometimes a participant has difficulty staying with a story line.** "Difficulty staying with a story line" means that the person has the central idea in mind, but

what comes out on paper might be a stream of seemingly unrelated ideas or conversational tangents.

- For these participants, facilitators can offer to modify the task from a 1-person writing requirement to a 2-person project. Help the participant select another participant, or facilitator, to develop a coherent story.
- You can use the two-person writing idea as a way to generate the story, but you can also use it in presentation. To do this, the facilitator will need to offer a sample or example of how the piece could be edited to include another person.

Once the initial writing is done, each story will need to be edited for clarity and to make sure that the writer's message comes across to the audience. For OMOD, "editing" is always *collaborative*.

A word about editing: In OMOD, facilitators aren't so much editors as *partners*. We call it "editing" because facilitators are asked to help a participant generate more or different content in order to complete a story, or perhaps cut down the length of a piece to fit the venue you're imagining, or accommodate for a person's speech patterns. Or sharpen the content focus so that the meaning is clear. None of this is done with a red pencil! It's done with a genuine sense of collaboration, in an effort to make sure that the person's message comes across in a way that is understandable and satisfying to the participant and his or her audience.

In the "editing" phase of your work as an OMOD facilitator, you will:

- Work with participants to develop their "best story" by editing and revising and expanding (or re-focusing to shorten) the content of their work as needed.
- The "best story" is the one that the participant wants to share.
- Recognize what's missing in a piece (detail, clear theme, meaning, attitude, personal details)
- Teach all participants to listen for "power punches" in each story (handout)

➤ ***Does the person have a clear idea of what the story is about?***

- If you have to ask yourself this question, the story as written or presented lacks focus.

- Your job will be to help the writer discover what the message is, and then show the participant how to get that message across. *(This will be reviewed in the writing example portion of OMOD Train- the-Trainer workshop.)*

➤ ***Does the person routinely rely on others to read or share their stories for them?***

- Some people who are initially reluctant to read or present their own material are simply fearful and lacking in confidence. Facilitators should ask if such participants can speak, and if they are willing to.
- Sometimes all it takes to help a participant speak up is permission to do the best you can and not worry about perfection.
- Make sure that the other workshop participants are listening. A shy participant who attempts to speak needs a ready audience.
- Shorten the piece to fit into the allotted presentation time if the person's delivery is too slow to use the original (longer) story script. However, use caution to not significantly dilute the story's message.
- For those who actually cannot speak effectively (speech/language impairment), the facilitator will need to support whatever alternative communication system the person already uses, or invent a new one.

➤ **Does the person speak clearly and with good control of their voice volume and rate of speech?**

- If you have a participant whose speech is difficult to understand, it's important to acknowledge that problem. Ask the participant to repeat what was said, then repeat it back to him or her to see if you have correctly understood. If that doesn't work, you can ask the participant what he or she usually does to repair a communication breakdown. Many people with significant speech impairments have someone in their lives that might be willing to help others get accustomed to their unusual speech pattern. Often, once someone familiar with the speech patterns can "interpret" in new situations, people in the group begin to understand more of what is being said. That's a win for everyone.
- If volume is a problem, try coaching for more sustained breath support.
- Be open to offering a microphone for performances if volume is an issue, and even in the workshops if volume is consistently a problem.

Social Accommodations: Social anxiety can cause an OMOD participant to lose focus, to have difficulty in group activities, and make it hard to write a story. Difficulty interpreting and responding to peers makes it hard to be a team player and to stay involved in activities.

If a participant exhibits this kind of social difficulty, try:

- First, ask the participant how they are doing (if they want help, if they need a break, etc.). Many times, OMOD participants know what they need and can tell you if you ask.
- Offering to pair the person with someone he or she knows, as a partner.
- Modifying the task to make it easier/more comfortable.
- Soliciting help from someone who knows the participant better. Just having a familiar person nearby can make a significant difference in how it feels to work with others in OMOD.
- Finally, you can offer a different task to do, just to break the tension.

Generating Draft of Showcase Lineup

Facilitators complete this after Session 4 and before Session 5

Facilitator Homework: Whenever possible, do this with another person who is involved in the workshop. Two heads are better than one. Review the copy of everyone's writing that you have compiled. Look for thematic links and/or potentially collaborative pieces. Draft a presentation lineup for solo and group pieces to present to the participants during Session 5.

Three most important parts of the process:

1. **Topic** – assign each piece a general topical category. This is critical to having a show that has thematic coherence
2. *Establishing a “Topic Arc”*
3. **Properly allotting time:** Facilitators impact the success of the lineup by timing each piece to reinforce the topic arc (giving proportionate amounts of time)

Generating a tentative draft of the lineup for solo and group pieces

- Determine how much time the group has for the presentation/performance.
- Gather all the pieces you would like to use.
- Print out all of the available writing that you'd like to use. Even short, “incomplete” homework assignments can be useful.
- Facilitator(s) read through (or listen to) all of the writings.

TOPIC: When all the pieces of writing have been read, the facilitators discuss each one and assign it a possible “topic” area. They have to agree on what the piece is saying, or trying to say, in order to assign it to a topic. Here is how OMOD has done it in the past, but you may need to do it differently, depending on who is involved in the process and what their specific skills are.

- If you are both working with printed stories, physically lay out the pieces on a table or other flat surface, putting “like” items together (all the pieces that have to do with riding the bus go in the same pile. All the pieces about work go into another pile. Etc.) If you are using a different medium, modify the process to fit what you're using (audio recordings, etc.)

- If a piece doesn't fit into a category, then identify it as a separate item. For instance, if someone writes about loving animals or pets, and nobody else does, but that piece is really good, put into the "loves animals" category, all by itself. It's often easy to fit something like that into a lineup even if it doesn't seem to "fit" on the first reading.
- Don't worry if you don't agree with each other as to which category a piece belongs in. You're going for a first sifting of these materials. The pieces may jump around into other categories; they often do with inexperienced writers.
- Now try to imagine these pieces in a show lineup order. Write the tentative lineup down, discuss your decisions about where to put each piece, but don't spend hours on this. Once you read through the pieces in the order you've created, you may want to change the order anyway.

A TOPIC ARC: Even if your group has not produced many stories that have obvious connections with other stories, you can create the connections by the way you put the show together. You don't want the show to appear to be like a talent show, a look-at-what-I-can-do kind of experience. Almost any set of writings, when the writing is about real life, can be arranged to make an overall "point" or have a recognizable theme. Here are some hints to use in creating the "arc," or the sequence of stories.

- Start with quick, easily accessible and intelligible pieces that will get and keep audience attention. Starting off with an ensemble piece is great if the people involved in it can be relied on to keep the timing of the piece going. If the timing of an ensemble piece doesn't work, the piece will fail, no matter how cleverly written. Also, in ensemble pieces, the writing doesn't have to be that sharp because people have short bits to deliver and there is movement between speakers.
- Remember that whatever you do as the first piece in the show will set the tone for the whole thing.
- If you're going to shift from ensemble to individual pieces, think about links between writings. Does the piece about work go ahead of the piece about dating? Or can you make a link between them?

- **If you have a solo piece written by someone who doesn't speak well, but the piece is good, could that one become an ensemble piece?** If Priscilla writes a great piece about disability and online dating, but usually can't get it together to actually speak in front of people, use some alternative methods.
 - Enlist three or four other people to do the piece with her.
 - Four people, with their backs to the audience. Each with a poster board sentence (or two) that they read out loud once she moves toward them and taps them on the shoulder.
 - She can have her own poster board sentence, and read it if that works.
 - Or use a background video, or have other women in the cast add their own experiences to her piece, but let her story be the most fully developed one.
 - Or let her pull her "ideas" (written on large cue cards) out of a big box with a funny label on it, and she reads the card (1 sentence only!) and drops it on the floor. Repetition adds humor to the piece and saves her from having to remember anything.
- **Look for "performability."** If someone writes a short piece about advocacy and it feels dry and not very original, but advocacy is something that all of the cast members are interested in, look for the one sentence in there that makes you interested as a reader.
 - *Example 1:* Maybe there's a sentence in there about joining with others in advocacy issues, like "When we all get together, we're a big noisy group and we can really get things done!" That's a performable moment. It invites you, as facilitator, to make the piece an ensemble piece. To give each of three or four other people lines from her story, to have them interact with each other using (most likely somewhat modified versions of her text) and to have them all end with being a big noisy group!
 - *Example 2:* Someone writes a piece about prayer. That person has a hard time remembering lines, but really enjoys the speaking part of this project. He's written a piece about prayer and meditation that he learned after his head injury. He cannot be expected to present the piece as a stand-up piece because of his memory problems, but it's such a good piece you would like to use it. Maybe end the lineup with this lovely text about finding a way back to life. He talks about sitting in a meditative posture, about

prayer beads, etc. So, you try having him tie specific lines in his piece to specific physical actions. He can remember a sequence of physical actions, and that helps him to associate which lines go with which postures. And, it gets the audience's full attention, because he is moving a little bit while he's talking, and the movement complements the narrative. You've found a performative aspect that will help him deal with his problem with memory, win/win.

A piece for opening the show.

- Always start with something on the short side, 2 – 4 minutes, unless you've got a terrific first speaker/presenter
- What do you want the focus of the overall presentation to be? Pick a piece that heads the audience toward that topic or issue.
- Who's your best presenter? Don't feel obligated to use that person first. Sometimes it's better to put that person in to reboot after less capable participants have slowed down the energy, etc. But DO start with someone who is a reliably strong speaker.
- Never start with something sad or emotionally complicated. You have to earn that with an audience. It comes later.
- Humor is always good, but you have to make sure that your audience will "get" what is supposed to be funny. Sometimes audiences don't think it's ok to laugh.
- Start personal: Have you heard "The personal is political"? Well, it is, and it's also very compelling if it's done right. If you start the show off with something that audience members will easily be able to understand, you've got them right from the beginning.
 - Try something like a piece about childhood memories, or having sisters, or trying to ride a bike, or not being able to cook well. Something simple and personal, a piece that most people can identify with. OR, do the opposite, and start out with something that people have never thought about, like how it feels when somebody asked you "What happened to you?" or "What's wrong with you?" in public. Start with a challenge, or with a simple personal connection. Either one, done right, serves to get your audience in tune with your speakers.

Potential closing for the lineup

- Bringing the group together for a short ensemble piece helps audiences remember each person in the group, and signals to them that the presentation may be drawing to a close. That's a good thing.
- Use "What you don't know about me" - a quick piece where people talk about what they are like in private, in 1 or 2 sentences. *Example:* "What you don't know about me is that I taking care of my 7 year old niece. Every afternoon, we go for a walk and I buy her a treat at the store near where she lives." Or "When you're not looking, I'm trying to learn how to sew. I made a pot holder last week, and it works!" or "What you don't know about me is that I go to the gym. I ride the bus. I do weight work Tuesdays and Fridays." These are just small facts about their lives, but taken as a whole, what comes out is that everyone who has been a speaker has things in their life that are exactly like what's in the lives of everyone in the audience.
- **Or try, "I'm from."** A short and deliberately poetic or lyrical statement of what has influenced their lives most and/or how they have tackled limitations. Very short, very to the point, as poetic as anyone wants to get, as long as it's short. *Example:* "I'm from special education just because people didn't know what I could do, but I know what I can do" or "I'm from small towns in south Texas, from living in a state institution for 10 years, and now I'm from that place where you learn to live on your own." Or "I'm from being that girl with the crutches, from 'You need to look elsewhere, you don't fit here.' Now I'm fitting in just fine." "I'm From" can really finish off just about any showcase with a sense of pride and sincerity without being sentimental. It can be done by each person moving to a designated spot on the stage or in the room, saying their name first, and then their sentence, and then the next person comes into that space and does the same. You can arrange them in a tableau, with the final person completing the tableau and that gives you a good visual, unified image to the end the show.

TIMING: Once you have a preliminary draft, consider:

- How much time does each piece take to perform?
- Do you have that much time?
- If not, you can either
 - Cut an entire piece
 - Shorten existing pieces
 - Combine two stories that might be complimentary into one to shave off some time

Who's My Audience? (Session 3 Optional Activity)

In Session 3, OMOD participants are asked to review what they've written and begin to imagine presenting their Best Story to a live audience.

As a facilitator, this gives you an opportunity to think and talk about "audience" and to teach participants to consider their audience when they prepare their presentations. You are not obligated to have this conversation as part of Session 3, but if you want to introduce this concept, here are some questions that could frame that discussion.

1 Who might be interested in hearing your stories? (5 minutes)

- Guide them to identify potential audiences for their selected stories, including the OMOD Showcase and possible future audiences.
 - **Possible audiences:** Friends, families, and professionals/attendants who know the participants, *Goodwill Industries* conference, *Inclusion Works* Conference, Self-Advocacy conference, Youth Leadership conference, etc.

#2 How do the people in your audience determine how you tell your story? (5 minutes)

- **Discussion Example:**
 - If I know that my audience consists of therapists (OT, PT, SLP, PA, etc.) there is a good chance that they will be open to stories about how I have learned to be independent, about my job, or my dating relationships.
 - On the contrary, if my audience is a parent group, they might be interested in hearing about family relationships, families working together, family life, ways to have fun together, redefining what "family" means, etc.
- **The more attention OMOD participants pay to who constitutes their audience for any given presentation, the more successful they will be.**

#3 How can I keep the Showcase audience interested? (10 minutes)

- **First**, imagine what the Showcase audience will be interested in (Showcase is the first audience they will perform for)
 - **Consider things such as:**
 - Humorous stories about exciting real life experiences (travel, sports, music, learning to cook, helping your Grandfather, etc.)
 - Stories that explain or describe their daily life and living situations (Where do you live? What supports do you need? How is your life different from/same as mine?)
 - Work, education, dating, religion
- **Second**, briefly discuss, and identify the “power punches” (the strongest part of their piece, the “message”) in their stories and verify that their message suits their audience.

At the end of the group discussion, instruct the participants to return to the main group and briefly discuss the messages they want to share with their Showcase audience. (5-8 minutes)

Writing Exercise: *Revisions* (25 minutes)

Instruct the participants to make the changes discussed in small groups to their stories. Encourage them to break their stories up into one- or two-sentence paragraphs for the microphone activity following the break.

Video Coaching (Session 5 Optional Activity)

Learning Objectives:

Participants will learn to self-assess their story delivery through a guided group review of their videorecorded presentations.

Supplies:

1. Video camera (This activity can be done with a number of different cameras, but some models may be more conducive for immediate playback, which is necessary for completing this activity within the typical three-hour session).
2. Video playback equipment (this should include a computer connected to a projector or other monitor large enough for the entire class to view clearly and speaker(s) loud enough for the whole class to hear).
3. Copies of the Showcase Lineup for all participants

Basic Instructions:

To maximize the use of time, facilitators who plan to use Video Coaching will set up Session 5 to look like this:

- Facilitators distribute the draft of the Showcase Lineup to all participants and helpers.
- 1:1 coaching takes place with participants in the regular Workshop space
- Videotaping takes place in a separate space so as not to interrupt the larger group's work, and to minimize distractions while participants are being videotaped.
- Use the Showcase Lineup to set the order for videotaping so that participants begin to understand who will go before them, and after them, in the actual presentation.
- Videotape each participant practicing their presentation.
- Once all the videotaping is complete, reassemble the entire group for a review of the videotaped presentation.

Instructions for the Video Review:

- **Review Audience Etiquette**
 - Before viewing the videos, the instructor will reiterate key points from the previous session's discussion on proper audience etiquette. For example: refrain from talking or texting; silence your phone, give full attention to speaker, etc.
- **Remind participants to look carefully at their own video and do a simple self-assessment** (Ask them to answer the questions out loud):
 - Was I easy to understand? (rate of speech, volume, clear pronunciation)
 - What did my body say about me while I was speaking?
 - What was the Greatest Thing about me?
 - What could I improve?
- **Then, ask these four questions to their peers.**
 - Was the speaker easy to understand? (rate of speech, volume, clear pronunciation)
 - What did her body say about her? (nervous, happy, angry, shy?)
 - What was the Greatest Thing about the speaker's presentation?
 - What could the person improve?
- **End by identifying two or three main things for each person to focus on during the week as preparation for the Showcase.**

Remember:

When coaching individually or employing videotape feedback in your OMOD workshop:

- **Always be supportive:** no room for negativity on any level
- Look for changes **participants are willing to make**
- **Respect the story**, make suggestions, don't take over!
- **Nothing is ever perfect and nothing ever needs to be!**

Including All Learners:

- Encourage participants with visual impairments to pay special attention to the vocal aspects of each presentation:
 - Could they understand the speaker?
 - Did the speaker pronounce clearly?
 - Did the speaker sound nervous or confident?
 - Did the speaker speak too slowly or quickly?
 - Was the speaker loud enough?
- Encourage sighted participants to visually describe or explain the physical aspects of each presentation. For example:
 - If a participant observes that the speaker is nervous, ask them to explain why. What specifically about the speaker's body language suggests she may be nervous? Was she avoiding eye contact during her presentation? This serves the double purpose of audio describing the video presentation and reinforcing what different body language communicates to the audience.
- Encourage hearing participants to do the same for deaf or hard of hearing participants, but describing the vocal qualities instead.
- Offer to replay brief excerpts of each presentation that exemplify different observations, which may also coincide with each other. For example:
 - When a speaker looks down and avoids eye contact, their voice may also become quieter and less clear, as their speech is directed downwards. This may give the audience an impression that the speaker is either nervous or uninterested in their own story. Point out these connections to participants who are visually impaired or hard of hearing and may not be aware of them.

Extensions:

- You may want to brainstorm about ways for participants to assess their own presentations using the technology they have available at home. This may include their phones, webcams or built-in computer cameras for recording video, voice recorders or built-in computer microphones for isolated recorded audio review, etc. Ask the participants what kind of technology they have available and provide basic instruction in how to utilize that technology for video or audio self-assessment.

- You may also choose to incorporate an alternate prompt during the filming portion of this activity to demonstrate the contrast between a more conversational, off-the-cuff presentation and a prepared reading of a story. For example, asking a participant to tell a story about something funny that happened to them in the last few weeks may draw out a more relaxed and engaging delivery than the story they are preparing for the showcase which they have read over and over again. Play back one presentation after another for the participant, point out these differences, and encourage them to memorize or familiarize themselves enough with their story that they can go off script more frequently and/or incorporate more conversational elements in their showcase presentations.

Feedback:

- When you bring the group together before leaving the workshop on Session 5:
 - Ask the participants how they are feeling about their stories, their presentations, and any other concerns they might have.
 - Ask if anyone has any questions or concerns about the upcoming showcase.
 - If any participants feel nervous about the upcoming showcase, offer tips about how to cope with stage fright.

OMOD Volunteer Training Guide

Volunteers are essential to the success of any OMOD workshop. Volunteers may assist with a number of tasks throughout the six weeks of the OMOD class, including but not limited to:

- Classroom setup and cleanup
- Making copies of handouts and/or participants' stories
- Scanning and emailing participants' stories to the workshop facilitator
- Taking notes on a flipchart(s) or whiteboard/chalkboard during select activities
- Facilitating small group discussions and/or activities
- Setting up microphone(s) and PA equipment and adjusting the microphone(s), volume levels, and/or microphone stand(s) for OMOD participants during class readings, rehearsal, and even the final showcase
- Audio describing videos or other visual media used in the classroom for people who are visually impaired
- **Note:** We do not, however, recommend using a volunteer American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter unless he or she is a professional, offering their time to the project.

The two most important tasks OMOD volunteers are called on to do are:

- **Scribing and/or prompting**
 - “Scribing” means physically writing or typing for participants who cannot write themselves. This primarily consists of simply writing down word for word what the participant is saying. There may be times when the volunteer will need to stop to clarify something the participant said, but everything written down should be in the participant’s own words.
 - “Prompting” means asking pertinent questions of a participant so that, when answered, may reveal a coherent story. These questions often include the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of the story, but may also include questions for clarification on what the participant said or meant to say. Participants who require prompting may be able to physically write with little difficulty but struggle to think of something to write about or structure their story into a clear beginning, middle, and end with a strong message.

- Most OMOD classes will include a combination of participants who need assistance scribing and participants who require prompting. Many times you will not know who will need exactly what kind of help until the first session, so it is important that your volunteers have a basic understanding of how to do both.
- **Coaching**
 - The fifth session of every OMOD class includes one-to-one coaching, which means each OMOD participant will have their own coach, usually a volunteer, to listen to the participant's story and offer constructive feedback and positive encouragement to facilitate the best possible presentation of the participant's story. To ensure the success of this coaching session, there must be at least one volunteer or other staff person per participant. Each volunteer will receive individualized coaching instructions for each participant (see *NOTE FOR FACILITATORS at the close of Session 4* for more on how to generate individualized coaching instructions), but all volunteers should be familiar with the principles of coaching before the start of class.

To best orient your volunteers, you should organize a three-hour volunteer training ideally at least one week prior to the first session on the same day of the week and time and in the same location as the class itself, so you can assess your volunteers' punctuality and ability to travel to the classroom location.

(Refer to *Volunteer Recruitment Packet* on OMOD website for more information on how to recruit volunteers for an OMOD class and sample training packet forms mentioned below.)

Here is a sample schedule, with brief explanation, for a typical OMOD volunteer training:

- **Welcome and Introduction to OMOD** (5 minutes)
 - Review the goals of the six-week course and showcase.
- **Read and Sign Training Packet Forms** (20 minutes)
 - General Policies
 - Volunteer Contract
 - Emergency Contact Information
 - Media Release Authorization
 - Volunteer Timesheet
 - Confidentiality Agreement

- **Tour Classroom Facility** (10 minutes)
 - Emergency Exits
 - Bathrooms
 - Break room, if available
- **Microphone Equipment Demo** (15 minutes)
 - Show the volunteers how the microphone(s) and PA equipment are set up and turned on, and have each volunteer, if able, practice adjusting the microphone stand.
- **Review Six Sessions** (45 minutes)
 - Provide an overview of each of the six sessions' activities and the accompanying volunteer responsibilities.
- **Break** (10 minutes)
- **Practice Writing Activity** (45 minutes)
 - Pass out writing pads and pens to the volunteers and ask them to each spend 15 minutes writing a personal story using the prompt: "Write about a powerful memory."
 - Let the volunteers know when there are two minutes remaining.
 - When the 15 minutes is up, ask each volunteer to read what he/she wrote aloud to the group.
 - After each volunteer reads, ask what the others thought and prompt them with the following questions:
 - What was the story about?
 - What was the best part of the story?
 - What did you want to know more about?
 - Was anything unclear? If so, what?
 - End this activity by explaining to the volunteers that this is the same process the participants will be going through during the OMOD writing workshop. Participants will similarly make themselves vulnerable, and it's important to first focus on the positive aspects of each story before discussing areas where revision may be needed. The actual editing is about clarification and making sure the audience understands the writer's message, not grammar.

- **Review Scribing/Prompting Duties** (10 minutes)
 - Briefly explain the distinction between scribing and prompting assistance to participants. More information about these duties is included in the first page of this volunteer training guide.
 - Draw connections to the previous practice writing activity, where applicable.

- **Screen OMOD Coaching Video** (10 minutes)
 - Play “Coaching a Writer” video found on the VSA Texas YouTube channel, found here: <https://youtu.be/p5eKy7YPVnI>
 - This video offers a thorough explanation of the OMOD coaching process. Reiterate that one-to-one coaching takes place in the fifth session and that each volunteer will receive individualized coaching notes for the participant they will coach during that session.

- **Answer Questions and Wrap Up** (10 minutes)
 - Answer any questions the volunteers may have about any of the material covered during the training and reiterate the six session dates, times, and locations before dismissing the volunteers.



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