

Section 3: Preparing Oral Presentations of Your Profile

You may be called upon to present part or all of your HIV/AIDS epidemiologic profile to your CPG.

Reducing the contents of the profile to a meaningful presentation is challenging, but an effective oral presentation can be a key element in communicating the information in the profile.

Developing an Effective Presentation

Developing an effective presentation involves several elements.

Know your audience and determine your purpose and objectives

You have an advantage because you know that your audience is the CPG. In writing your profile, you have already thought about who they are, what information they need, and their level of familiarity with the content and terminology. You know your audience members have differing levels of experience in working with data.

The objectives of the presentation are defined by the profile.

- Explain the purpose of the profile (e.g., to help planning groups set priorities among populations who need prevention and care services and determine current and future needs for programs such as counseling and testing services).
- Describe the major trends of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the service area and the implications of those trends.

Organize your presentation

The opening

The opening is intended to get the the attention of your audience and prepare them for what is to come. Depending on the context of the presentation and your audience, you may want to

- describe the benefit of the presentation to the audience—why they should care

- build rapport with the audience—make eye contact; if the audience is small, try to address people by name
- establish your credibility by *briefly* explaining your background, position, and experience
- review the agenda or topics you will cover

The body

Structure your presentation so that you tell your audience what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then summarize what you've told them.

Find out how much time you will have for the presentation. Typically, you will have 30 minutes in a meeting that includes other important topics. Plan your presentation to fit the time allotted. Avoid the common mistake of trying to pack too much information into a limited time.

Keep the presentation concise and focused on the needs and interests of your audience. Present what *they* need to know, not what *you* know. If you have a lot of material, consider presenting it at several meetings.

Try not to read your presentation. Your audience will be far more engaged if you speak naturally.

Use techniques for holding your audience's interest:

- Keep the pace brisk by making a point and then moving quickly to the next point.
- Consider making your presentation interactive by asking a question or soliciting opinions.
- Include visual aids, such as overheads, handouts, or slides. Allow 1 minute per slide (more if your tables and figures require detailed explanation).
- Focus on your delivery. Vary the inflection and tone of your voice (avoid speaking in a monotone).
- If appropriate, include descriptions specific to your service area. For example, describe the kind of clients a particular clinic might see, or recount a description of high-risk drug injection practices gleaned from an ethnographic study conducted in the service area.

The closing

Many speakers lose their audience during the closing, missing an opportunity to reinforce key points. Clue the audience that you are closing: "In closing...." or "To summarize...." Restate your key points and main ideas.

Focus your content

Keep the presentation simple and *give the results first*. Focus on the major points in the executive summary. For example, more persons are currently living with HIV in the

service area than at any other time, AIDS incidence and mortality have decreased or increased, or the highest HIV infection rates are among MSM who also inject drugs.

Explain the confidentiality standards for your data and how the data are protected. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the results so that users know the implications when making prevention and care program decisions.

Point out national trends. Much of the media coverage of the epidemic is based on national data. Help the audience differentiate the information from the media and the information they need to check locally to see whether the local epidemic is showing the same trends.

If you have surprising or puzzling results, point them out. It is possible that someone in the audience will have an interpretation. Also, be explicit about what you do not know (it is a good way to increase your credibility).

Explain epidemiologic terms and presentation methods

Depending on the expertise and experience of your audience, you may need to explain epidemiologic terms. Use simple language and provide examples. For instance, here are a definition and an example of *incidence*:

Term	Explanation	Example
Incidence	The number of new cases during a specified time, often a year	The incidence of heterosexually acquired AIDS increased steadily among women in the United States, from 1,100 cases diagnosed in 1985 to 5,700 cases diagnosed in 1995.

You may also need to explain how to read and interpret the tables and figures. Table 4-3 illustrates an aid that could accompany an explanation of how to read a table.

Table 4-3
Example of aid to help explain how to read a table

Descriptive Title		Column
HIV exposure mode	Cases, No.	Total, %
Male-male sexual contact	589	34
Male-male sexual contact and injection drug use	Cell 125	7
Injection drug use	476	Row 28
Heterosexual contact	389	23
Other or undetermined ^a	145	8
Total	1724	100

^aFootnote.

If you have time and it is appropriate to your audience, also consider explaining

- **Your data sources.** Show an actual HIV/AIDS case report or other data source, such as a report containing statewide hospital discharge data or a report from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. The audience members are less likely to ask for information you do not have if they can see the data you collect.
- **Your research methods and data analyses.** However, do not focus too much on the methods or the data analysis. Remember that end users need to make decisions based on the profile's results, not the analyses.

Provide handouts

Consider providing the following material for your audience to take home from the meeting:

- copies of your slides or other visuals
- handouts summarizing your main points and conclusions

Depending on your resources and service area, you may wish to make your presentation available later by recording it on a cassette tape or creating a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation.

Additional tips

- Practice delivering the presentation to persons with no background in epidemiology. Ask for feedback about the clarity of your presentation, explanation of terms, and discussion of pertinent data.
- Schedule additional presentations or orientations to address more detailed issues related to 1 or more specific behavioral risk groups or to particular care issues that may be of interest to stakeholders, advocates, or planners.
- Make yourself available to attend other meetings at which users will discuss epidemiologic issues or use the profile.