

BRING YOUR RESEARCH TO LIFE WITH PUBLIC SPEAKING

PURPOSE

The information on this flyer supports researchers to deliver presentations that are clear, engaging and impactful by strengthening structure, delivery and audience engagement.

CONTRIBUTORS

Content is based on the workshop delivered for GACD by Rich Watts (Further Communications) in May 2026. For more information, please see richpublicspeaking.co.uk.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE FROM THE START

Strong openings capture attention, create interest, and signal relevance. Use a shocking statistic, a curious promise, or a powerful question. A clear introduction should also establish purpose and audience benefit.



USE A CLEAR STRUCTURE TO IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING

Using a structure of three to five clear, well-organised 'chunks' improves audience understanding, retention, and engagement. When too many separate ideas are presented at once people lose track.



END WITH A MEMORABLE CONCLUSION

A strong ending reinforces your key message and makes it stick. Summarise your main points, highlight why they matter, and finish with a clear call to action or takeaway your audience can remember and use.



USE YOUR VOICE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF INFLUENCE

The key to transforming your presentation from monotone to memorable lies in playing with power, pitch, pace, and pause. Varying these at key moments can create gravitas, passion, urgency, and emphasis.

Create an engaging opening

Strong openings capture attention, create interest and signal relevance. A clear introduction should also establish purpose and audience benefit.

... but how do most presentations delivered by scientists start?

"Hello I'm [NAME] and I am the [JOB TITLE] at [INSTITUTION]."

Human focus has evolved to notice the new and the unusual. We can use this to our advantage by beginning presentations with something other than the usual.

A SHOCKING STATISTIC

It grabs attention immediately by surprising the audience and signalling that the topic is important and worth listening to.

EXAMPLE

"Patients in rural areas were making up to four separate clinic visits every month just to manage two chronic conditions. My name is Tom Jones and today I will be speaking about..."

A CURIOUS PROMISE

It creates intrigue by hinting at value or insight to come, motivating the audience to stay engaged.

EXAMPLE

"I want to show you how one small change to clinic design dramatically improved outcomes for two chronic diseases at once. My name is Tom Jones and today I will be speaking about..."

A POWERFUL QUESTION

It prompts the audience to think and personalise the topic, drawing them mentally into the presentation from the start.

EXAMPLE

"How do you improve outcomes for two lifelong conditions in a health system already under strain? My name is Tom Jones and today I will be speaking about..."

Structure your presentation for clarity

If you want people to remember your research, structure it into a small number of clear, well-organised chunks. This improves audience understanding, retention, and engagement.

HUMANS HAVE LIMITED WORKING MEMORY

When too many separate ideas are presented at once people forget, lose track of structure, or fail to see the key message.

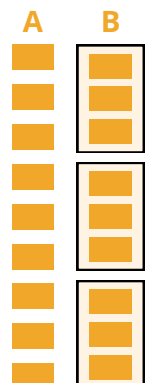
Research in cognitive psychology suggests that working memory can hold a limited number of information 'chunks' at once, classically around seven (± 2). Later evidence suggests the true limit may be closer to three to five.

LIMIT THE NUMBER OF KEY POINTS

Aim for three to five main messages (ideal), or no more than seven (maximum). This helps with audience retention. Too many points leads to cognitive overload.

USE 'CHUNKING' TO ORGANISE CONTENT

Group information into meaningful clusters. For example, instead of nine disconnected findings (A), group these into three connected themes (B). This aligns with how memory naturally compresses information.



TOP TIPS FOR BOOSTING RECALL THROUGH THOUGHTFUL STRUCTURE

USE 'JOINER PHRASES'

Help your audience follow the flow with clear 'joiner phrases' to transition explicitly between sections.

Pause either side of joiner phrases to verbally signpost the presentation structure and give your audience a moment to follow.



"Moving onto our next question..."



"Now we have discovered X, let's move onto Y..."



USE QUESTIONS AS TITLES

Frame your section titles as questions to continue engaging your audience.

Background and rationale

→ **Why does integrated care matter?**

Research objectives

→ **What were we trying to find out?**

Methods and study design

→ **How did we conduct the study?**

Key findings

→ **What did we discover?**

Recommendations

→ **What should happen next?**

Deliver a strong conclusion

A strong ending ensures your message is remembered and acted upon and consists of three elements:

RECAP THREE MAIN POINTS

Remind your audience how good the presentation was!



TELL THEM WHAT TO DO NEXT

Direct their energy with a clear call to action.
What do you want them to think / feel / do?



LEAVE THEM WITH A SINGLE THOUGHT

"By speaking with you today I hope that I have...
[INSERT YOUR GOAL HERE]"

Develop your delivery skills

PACE

Use speaking rhythm deliberately. Slow down to emphasise key points, build drama, or explain complex ideas. Speed up to create excitement, convey passion, and drive momentum.

PAUSE

Build in deliberate pauses after key points to let ideas land and give your audience time to reflect.

PITCH

Pitch is the variation in how high or low your voice sounds, helping convey emotion and avoid monotony. Higher pitch signals excitement or urgency, while lower pitch suggests seriousness or authority.

POWER

Power is about speaking with clarity, strength, and control. It comes from using deep, steady breathing as a natural amplifier.

Effective delivery combines clarity, confidence, and audience awareness.

Below is a script for a short presentation. It is marked up to show how the speaker can alter their delivery to appear confident and clear, and emphasise the need for action. What other delivery notes would you add?

Smile!

Use open body language here to invite curiosity

Slow the pace after "the goal was simple"

Take a pause after this word

Emphasise the word "patient"

Build power in voice to add gravitas to the findings

Emphasise the words "scalable" and "cost-effective"

Use open body language here to optimise trust and honesty when talking about the challenges

Pause at the end of this sentence

Slow the pace with the concluding sentence

Emphasise how *all* of those elements of the system benefit from the integrated clinic

"Good morning everyone.

What if I told you that many patients in our health system are still making multiple clinic visits every month to manage conditions that could be treated together?

In our study, we looked at integrated HIV-hypertension clinics across six rural health centres. The goal was simple. Could we improve patient outcomes while also reducing pressure on the healthcare system?

What we found was striking. Patients attending integrated clinics were significantly more likely to have controlled blood pressure, while HIV viral suppression rates remained consistently high. Patients also reported spending less money on transport and less time away from work and family responsibilities.

Now, from a patient perspective, that may sound like a practical improvement. But from a health system perspective, it represents something much bigger. It suggests that integration is not simply convenient. It may be one of the most scalable and cost-effective ways to manage chronic disease in low-resource settings.

Of course, implementation was not perfect. Some clinics initially experienced staff shortages and concerns about increased workload. But importantly, those challenges reduced over time with training and clearer clinical processes.

So, the question we now face is no longer whether integrated care is possible.

The real question is this: How long can we afford to continue delivering these services separately? Because the evidence increasingly suggests that patients, healthcare workers, and health systems all benefit when we bring this care together."

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GACD is the working name for GACD Action, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered by the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Charity no. 1174867).