

## Effective Messaging in Presentations

Making a presentation is an opportunity to increase awareness, change attitudes and behaviours and mobilize others to join your cause. When given this opportunity, make sure your messages are delivered effectively to have the greatest impact on your audience.

**Developing key messages** – Key messages are clear and concise statements that allow you to communicate your position or viewpoint in a succinct and memorable manner.

Decide what you want your audience to remember and what you want to ask them to do following the presentation. Once decided, organize your thoughts into three main points or messages because research suggests that three is a basic organizational grouping that enhances the likelihood of your audience remembering the points made. Structuring the messages to include a problem, a solution and an action will help the messages flow.

Key messages should be kept as short and as simple as possible. Each message should be true, provable and well supported with a clear example. Supporting your key messages with analogies, examples, statistics and personal experiences will help to keep your audience engaged and personally connected to your presentation. Also, remember to refer back to these three messages regularly – repetition helps solidify your message.

**Leveraging AAMAC's key messages** – When communicating AAMAC's key messages, use your own story and personal experiences to support them. By doing this, you will provide context to the situation or issue, you will give the issue a face and you will enable others to see themselves in the situation.

For example, you can use your personal experience to support AAMAC's key messages around access to effective therapies, such as Exjade for iron overload:

1. *As a patient living with MDS, I need frequent blood transfusions to survive. These transfusions cause iron overload – a condition that can result in life-threatening complications if not treated. **The only treatment for iron overload that is accessible to me is a cumbersome, painful infusion that I can't tolerate at my age. There is another treatment option in Canada, but the government doesn't cover this drug and I can't afford it.***
2. *In October, 2006, Health Canada approved the first oral iron chelation treatment, Exjade\*, for iron overload, addressing an unmet medical need among MDS patients like me who require regular blood transfusions to survive. **Almost three years later, Exjade\* is still not listed on the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary for MDS and many patients don't have private drug coverage or the financial means to pay for it.***
3. *The Government of Ontario must act now to ensure that MDS patients like me have access to Exjade\* oral iron chelation therapy. **We urgently need this treatment, and are asking the Ontario Committee to Evaluate Drugs to list Exjade\* on the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary without further delay.***

**Bridging to key messages** – When answering questions, look for opportunities to reiterate your key messages. Though not every question will provide the perfect opportunity to incorporate a key message, through bridging, and the use of everyday phrases, most questions can be turned into a viable opportunity. This technique can also help move away from a negative topic.

**Bridging examples:**

- “We believe the real question is...”
- “I cannot speak for XX, but I can tell you...”
- “I’d be happy to discuss this some other time, but today we’re here to talk about...”
- “That’s an interesting question, but let me remind you...”

**Structuring an effective presentation** – Ensure your presentation has an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

- The introduction should include an overview of what you intend to cover (including your three main points), a clear explanation of why you are there and what you would like your audience to do with your information.
- The body of the presentation is the ‘meat’ of what you want to say. Often, this includes information to support what you’re asking them to do.
- The conclusion should be an overview of what was covered (reiterating the three main points) and should restate what you’re asking the audience to do.