



## Upcoming Events

[Click here](#) for an at-a-glance view of our upcoming events for the next 3 months!

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Medical Director  
David Musick, PhD,  
Associate Dean, Faculty  
Affairs, VTCSOM

*“You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can’t get them across, your ideas won’t get you anywhere”*

**-Lee Iacocca**

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## Improving Public Speaking Through Toastmasters and Beyond

Formal presentation is an integral element of practice in most professional fields. <sup>1</sup> , <sup>2</sup> Specifically, in Medicine, physicians are often expected to present at the local, regional, and national level. <sup>3</sup> However, honing one’s presentation skills is often not an element formally addressed within medical training.

Toastmasters is one way to begin to acquire presentation skills training. Toastmasters is a non-profit educational organization that offers a multi-level program to help develop the skills and confidence needed for effective presentations. Public speaking and leadership skills are taught through a worldwide network of clubs, with membership that currently exceeds 358,000 in over 16,800 clubs in 143 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators, and leaders. Carilion Clinic is fortunate to have its own Toastmasters club.

Carilion Clinic’s Toastmasters club recently earned the designation of President’s Distinguished Club, the highest level of recognition available to a Toastmasters club. To achieve this award, the club met the membership prerequisite and achieved at least 9 of the 10 goals in education, membership, and administrative requirements.

The success of the program and Carilion Clinic’s club is based on positive, supportive experiential learning. Prepared speeches, leadership projects, impromptu speaking, and many delivery techniques are practiced at every meeting. The following are a few tips from Toastmasters and evidence-based resources that can be used for your own development or shared with your learners.

### Tips for Confidence

- Visualize success and practice: Schedule time in your day to practice, just as you would any other appointment or important task.
- Use good posture: Ensure good posture and confident steps to approach the speaking area.
- Take a deep breath, make eye contact, and smile: If you are smiling and confident, it is likely that the audience will smile back, be more engaged, interested, and adopt your point of view. <sup>4</sup>
- Love the topic: The most captivating speakers are those who are passionate about their subjects and know them well. <sup>5</sup>

### Tips for Delivery

- Be aware of crutch words and strive to eliminate them from your delivery: Crutch words usually bridge from one thought to another; however, they can be distracting to your audience and might suggest you are less knowledgeable or lack confidence. Common culprits are “ah”, “um,” “so,” “well,” “like,” nervous laughter, and any other utterances that do not add meaning to the content you deliver.

These are just a few of some basic tips and only the beginning of many others offered to build presentation skills. Toastmasters is a great resource for individuals to gain assistance with presentation organization, strong presentation openings, confidence building, presentation delivery tools, effective PowerPoint techniques, audience-centered speaking, Q&A preparation and more. Visit a Carilion Clinic Toastmasters meeting and make your colleagues and learners aware of the program to help reach communication goals.

Meetings occur on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 11:30am to 12:30pm at CRMH, visit the [Toastmasters hub](#) on Inside Carilion or contact Deb Ferron ( [dmferron@carilionclinic.org](mailto:dmferron@carilionclinic.org) /540-855-6862) for specific information. If you are interested in [targeted observation or consultation](#) on your teaching or presentation skills, you can also contact TEACH.

Deb Ferron, DTM

### References

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5. Alley, M. (2013). The craft of scientific presentations: Critical steps to succeed and critical errors to avoid. New York: Springer



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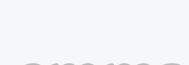
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