

## Role play in Presentations

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Role playing generally involves a group of people acting out defined roles in a particular scenario. The scenario is usually based around a situation that needs to be more closely examined and may aim to enable those involved (and watching) to consider different perspectives.

### **Role plays can be used effectively to present information and ideas to an audience because:**

- They can be used to convey core information in a less dense, more easily digestible way than one person presenting the details.
- They generally involve using strong visual and audio stimuli and cues (characters and any props) which helps the audience to remember the material presented.
- They entertain the audience and capture and hold their attention.
- Sometimes the subjects we have to present on are dry. Role plays can be used to inject appropriate humour.
- They are a good way of simulating a Q & A session where one role player asks another role player the kinds of questions they imagine that the audience might want to know the answers to.
- They offer a concise and clear way to present a number of arguments as each character can take a different view point.
- They allow us to analyse problems from different perspectives than those usually held by the audience and role players.
  - For example, one of you might role play an expert in the subject who is being interviewed, or a client/customer/patient who has an interesting perspective to share.
- They enable presenters to convey complex ideas relating to emotion or ethical decisions. For example, the audience has opportunity to observe and evaluate the actions of the role players and to compare them to their own experiences and suggest alternative actions etc.
- They can be used a means of providing insight and promoting sympathy amongst the audience.
- They should stimulate the audience to want to give their opinions.

### **What can go wrong?**

#### **For all the benefits of role play, it could all go wrong if:**

- The role play isn't relevant to, or appropriate for, your topic or purpose.
- The role play lasts too long and your audience get bored.
- The audience aren't aware of the purpose of the role play in the context of your presentation and don't know what they should do with it.
- The audience aren't given opportunity to comment on how they feel about the issues dealt with in the role play.
- Use of humour is inappropriate - either people are offended or don't understand it.

Just bear these in mind and have fun with it!