Guidance for first time concurrent session presenters

Preparation of presentation

1. Know your audience:
    a. The RCN Education Forum conference attracts a variety of delegates from clinical and educational settings– including NHS/private sector nurses, nurse educators from across the UK as well as overseas and a small number of non-nurses as well as nursing students. Delegates can be working in clinical practice, education or management.
    b. You therefore need to make sure that your presentation has enough 'background' information that everyone will understand it.
2. Timings: Your presentation should be a maximum of 20 minutes in length so that there is time for questions at the end. Practice beforehand so you are sure it is the right length and so that you are very familiar with the content.
3. Make sure your slides
    a. Don't have too much detail in them – use bullet points which indicate the main points you are making, and then talk around these points.
    b. Don't have too many slides – for a 20 minute presentation where you are presenting your main points on each slide you probably can only get through 7-10 slides (unless you are using some which are very quick to show – such as a picture of your hospital)
    c. For your first presentation you might want to avoid using video clips etc. unless you have had expert advice about how to embed/include them. If you are including them, it is always best to have a back-up plan in case they don't play on the day (so when you practice, identify how you'll do the presentation without the video clip(s) playing)
    d. Pictures and diagrams can 'liven up' a presentation and help illustrate the points you are making – take care that the detail can be seen if using graphs though.
4. Considerations for neurodivergent friendly presentation slides
    a. RCN recommended font type is Public Sans, Montserrat and Verdana.
    b. All fonts should be a minimum of 20pt.
    c. Avoid using a white background as this can be too harsh.
    d. Refrain from using pale colours for fonts, such as yellow, as they can be hard to read. White text on a red background and red text (in general) is not advised.
    e. Do not use 'flashy' special effects. A simple transition to next slide works best for neurodiverse audience members.
5. Content of presentation – this will vary slightly according to your topic, but some general points apply to most if not all:
    a. Start by introducing what you will be talking about, and include any explanation of terms which the audience may be unfamiliar with.
    b. If you are talking about your service/workplace – provide enough information at the beginning so that the audience can understand what you do. Remember that overseas nurses may not understand how the health service and nursing

education operates in the UK, so this may need explaining depending on your topic.

   c. Once you have established the context of what you are going to cover – use the main part of the presentation to explain/discuss this. If you are talking about role or service development – provide enough detail so that the audience can determine whether what you are saying might be applicable for their own role/area.

   d. At the end, summarise your main points and the learning you want to get across.

6. When you first complete your presentation you might want to have very detailed notes to go with it, or even a script. However as you practice and get familiar with the content, it's better to have some shorter notes to take to conference with you – you don't want to be reading out long notes during your presentation as this will be off putting for the audience. It may get tedious but the more you practice your presentation, the more familiar you will be with it and therefore more confident on the day.

Presenting at the conference

1. Ensure you have handed in a copy of your presentation to the RCN Events team when you arrive at conference, so they can load it onto the computer – it is often best to bring copies on a memory stick and also to e-mail it to yourself in case the memory stick does not work (or save it to online storage such as Dropbox)

2. If you have notes to go with your presentation, make sure you have more than one copy, in case you lose one.

3. Check out where and when you are presenting in advance – ideally when you first arrive at the conference.

4. If you are presenting a concurrent session – go to the room before your session of 3 presentations starts. This will allow you to introduce yourself to the chair of the session (and reassure them that you are around!) and check your presentation has loaded correctly.

5. It is a good idea to stay in for the other presentations in your session stream, especially if you are second or last. Session streams are generally themed so it will allow you to make any links to the other presentations during yours.

6. Presenting:
   a. Remember you know more about your topic than anyone else in the room – be confident!
   b. Switch your mobile off/to silent
   c. Check at the beginning that people at the back can hear you
   d. Don't announce you are very nervous or apologise that it's the first time you've presented – no-one need know, and if you have prepared you will be fine!
   e. Don't turn your back on the audience to read the presentation on screen – its ok to do this occasionally but becomes off putting for the audience if you do it too much. It is better to look at it on the laptop – especially to check you have moved the slides on in your presentation.
   f. Refer to your notes if you need to, but don't read them out – you lose eye contact with the audience.
   g. Eye contact is important – but do look at all the audience, as eye contact with just one or two people can be unnerving for them

h. If you lose your place or forget what you are going to say – relax – no-one else knows what you are going to say, so if you pause for a moment and say something relevant it doesn't matter if it's not exactly what you had planned/rehearsed.

i. Keep to time (session chairs have the right to stop you at the end of your allotted time, whether you've finished or not). You might want to put your watch on the table near the laptop (the chair may also warn you when 5, 2 and 1 minutes are left).

j. Once you've finished there will be a few minutes for questions – it's fine to ask for clarification if you don't understand what's being asked. If you don't know the answer then be upfront about this, but indicate how the questioner might find out the answer (or indicate how you will find out and let the questioner know).

k. Even after questions have finished some people may still come up to you and ask you questions they didn't want to ask in front of the audience – so it's worth hanging round for a minute of two.

l. Enjoy the feeling of having completed your presentation!