



International  
Diabetes  
Federation

# IDF Advocacy Academy session Improving your written & oral communication skills

11 January 2024  
4:00-5:15 pm CEST





# IMPROVING YOUR WRITTEN & ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## WELCOME FROM THE IDF ADVOCACY TEAM



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# IDF ADVOCACY ACADEMY

- IDF online platform gathering all IDF advocacy content and resources.
- Capacity building sessions are uploaded to the [Advocacy Academy webpage](#).
- Live sessions are exclusive for the IDF advocacy network:
  - IDF Members.
  - Blue Circle Voices (BCV).
  - Young Leaders in Diabetes (YLD).



# HOUSEKEEPING RULES

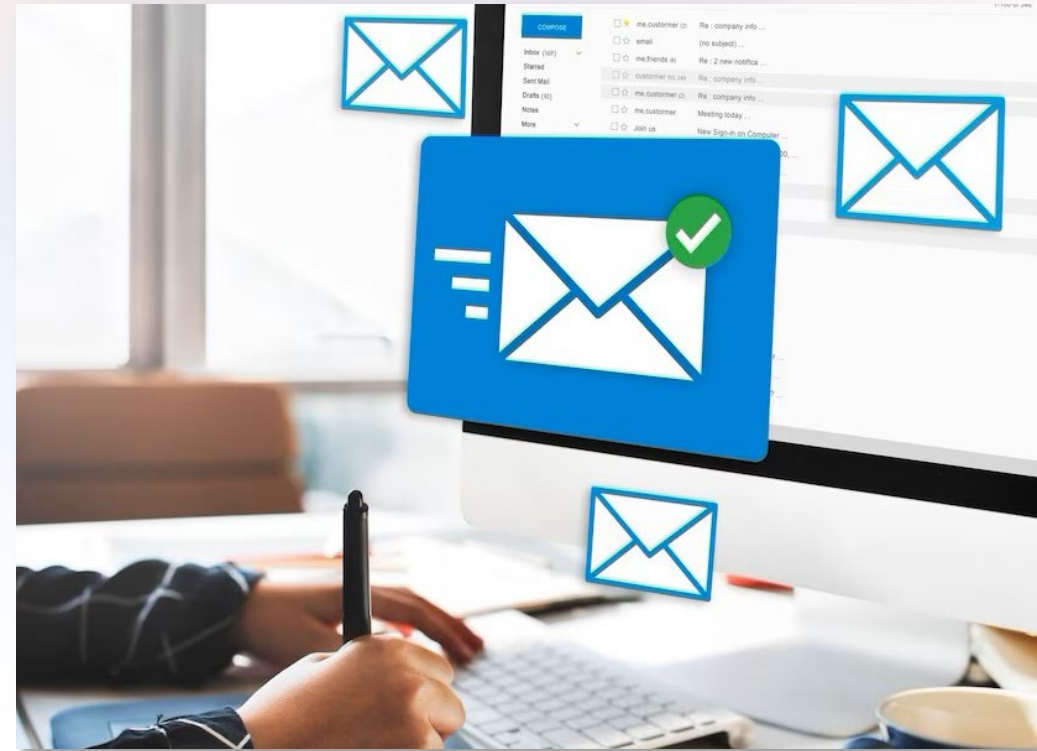
- This capacity building session is being recorded.
- You can activate Zoom-generated subtitles for this webinar by clicking on the closed caption (cc) button at the bottom of your Zoom window. Please note these subtitles are not 100% accurate.
- The recording, slides and feedback questionnaire will be sent to all registrants in a few days.
- Participants who attend at least 80% of this session live and respond to the feedback questionnaire will receive an attendance certificate. Please check your spam folders if you have not received them by February 2.
- **Please use the Q&A function to post your questions to speakers and panellists.**

# How to take your emails to the next level



# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO WRITE GOOD EMAILS?

- You will write thousands of emails during your professional and personal life.
- Most of the time, your first interaction with someone you want to collaborate with is going to be via email – it is your presentation letter.
- The first impression is very important: a good email maximises the chances of getting a response and establishing a strong connection.



# YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS AND NAME ON YOUR ACCOUNT

- We recommend email addresses related to your name – they look more professional.
  - *Avoid addresses such as "supercool100@gmail.com" - go for "name.familyname@gmail.com" if possible.*
- When creating your email address account, use your real name and not a nickname – otherwise recipients may be confused.
- Consider adding an automatic signature at the bottom of your emails, with your name and whatever position(s) you hold.



# STRUCTURE OF THE EMAIL

## SUBJECT



- Please do not forget to add it! If you don't, your email could look like spam.
- An informative subject line increases the chances of your email being read.
- When needed, add codes to the subject to attract the attention of the recipient:
  - *FOR FEEDBACK: change in my YLD project topic.*
  - *URGENT: delay in my flight to the IDF Congress.*
  - *FYI: WDD campaign report.*
  - *SAVE THE DATE: invitation to the event [NAME].*



# STRUCTURE OF THE EMAIL

## OPENING



- The default formula is “Dear [NAME],”. You can use the name of the person, or the title and family name.
  - *Dear Beatriz/Bruno/Isaure.*
  - *Dear Prof Hussain.*
- If you are close with the recipient, you can use “Hi” or “Hello”.
- If you do not know who will be reading the email, you can use “To whom it may concern,”.
- When contacting important people, Google what is the best formula.
  - *To the attention of her Excellency the Minister of Health.*

# STRUCTURE OF THE EMAIL

## INTRODUCTION



- If it is the first time you are writing to someone (or if it has been a long time since you last were in contact), please introduce yourself.
- Include your name and where you are from.
- If relevant, add your job position, the fact that you live with diabetes and in which capacity you are writing (YLD Trainee, YLD Mentor, IDF Member, member of a local diabetes association, etc).

# STRUCTURE OF THE EMAIL

## BACKGROUND



- Between your introduction and your request, you need to explain why you are reaching out.
  - *I am contacting you as a follow-up to the meeting we had last week, in which you explained that I could apply for one of the grants of your organisation.*
  - *I am contacting you because I have found your organisation while doing some diabetes-related research online and I found your project [NAME] very interesting.*
- It is important to provide background but be concise – not everyone will read long emails.

# STRUCTURE OF THE EMAIL

## REQUEST



- Be super clear with what you need from the recipient. If you need more than one thing, think about using bulletpoints.
- If you are not clear with what you want, it could be the start of a long chain of emails – you risk losing the attention of your recipient.
- If you need something by a specific date, set a deadline. If you do not, your request may end at the bottom of their to do list.
  - *I would really appreciate it if you could share your feedback to my proposal by [DATE].*

# STRUCTURE OF THE EMAIL

## CLOSING



- Between the request and your signature, always add an email closing.
- Do not forget about it – your email will look more polite.
- Use “Thank you,” for more informal emails. Go with “Sincerely”, or “Kind regards,” for more formal emails.
- Feel free to add “Looking forward to hearing from you.” before this closing formula.

## E-MAILING TIPS – CONTENT

- **Avoid typos:** use a spelling check tool.
- **Use acronyms wisely:** please write the full name first and then the acronym between brackets.
  - *The first time you say you are an IDF BCV member, write "I am an International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Blue Circle Voice (BCV)"*
- **Add links/hyperlinks:** make it easier for the recipient to access content.
  - *You can find more information about the IDF Atlas at <https://diabetesatlas.org/>.*
  - *If you want to know more about my work, please check my profile on LinkedIn: [LINK].*
  - *I invite you to learn more about my diabetes association here: [LINK].*



## E-MAILING TIPS – CONTENT

- **Anticipate questions:** try to address in your original email any questions you think the recipient may have.
  - *Instead of saying “I am sharing with you the IDF Atlas so you can find more about diabetes in our country”, share relevant Atlas figures.*
- **Provide solutions:** do not present potential collaborators with problems.
  - *Do not say “this will be very difficult”, say “this could be challenging, but in my experience the following approach could be useful”.*
- **Avoid yes/no responses:** use every occasion to take the relation forward.
  - *If someone responds asking you for a meeting, do not only say yes – propose a few tentative days.*



## E-MAILING TIPS - LAYOUT

- **Font and size:** use just one font and size – and if you copy-paste content, make sure to adapt it.
- **Colour:** we encourage you to use black across your emails (blue is more difficult to read). You can highlight/use another colour for the most important bits.
- **Underline:** use it with care, for example to bring attention to dates.
- **Bulletpoints:** use them if you are listing different items, have more than one request, etc.





## E-MAILING TIPS – FOLLOWING-UP

- **Follow-up on your emails:** you will not always get a response to your first email, so set-up calendar reminders not to forget to follow-up.
- **Always follow-up from the previous email:** do not start a new email thread every time you reach out. Follow-up from your previous email(s) – they provide background and a timeline of previous communications.
- **Respond to everyone on the emails:** click on “respond to all” instead of on “respond”, not to remove people in CC (unless you do want to remove them).
- **Use the BCC option when needed:** if you want to send the same email to many people who do not know each other, add their emails to the BCC field (data protection!).



# SUMMARY



- Treat your emails as your presentation letter.
- Choose the email subject carefully.
- Always include an opening, some background, your request, the closing formula and your name/signature at the bottom. Add your introduction for first emails.
- Provide sufficient background but be concise – leave the recipient wanting to know more about you.
- Revise for typos.

*Recommendation: share important emails with a friend or family member for feedback before sending them.*



# IMPROVING YOUR WRITTEN & ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## ENHANCING VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN HEALTH ADVOCACY



**DR JACKIE KASSOUF MAALOUF**

Founder and President at Dialeb, IDF Vice-President

*Lebanon*

# OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Role/Importance of Verbal Communication
- The 5 Golden rules (Do's)
- Non-verbal Communication
- Don'ts
- Elements of Advocacy Communication
- The Elevator Pitch technique
- How to present your advocacy strategy in 60 seconds
- Benefit of good communication skills for patients
- Conclusion & References



## INTRODUCTION

- Effective verbal communication plays a pivotal role in health advocacy, serving as a powerful tool to raise awareness, foster understanding, and drive positive change.
- The ability to articulate health-related information with empathy and clarity enhances the connection between advocates and their audience.
- In the context of health, where information can be complex and emotions run high, the impact of well-crafted verbal communication extends beyond mere dialogue – it becomes a catalyst for informed decision-making, community engagement, and ultimately, the improvement of public health outcomes, hence helping with sustainable health.

### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



# ROLE/IMPORTANCE OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- Whether you are discussing your advocacy ideas with one single person, presenting to a group or a large audience or on media channels, verbal communication skill are a must have to convey your message.
- Clearly there is a crucial intersection between effective verbal communication and the advocacy that underpins our collective well-being.
- Verbal communication can help in building relationships and can also help advocating for health causes following the golden rules of effective communication.

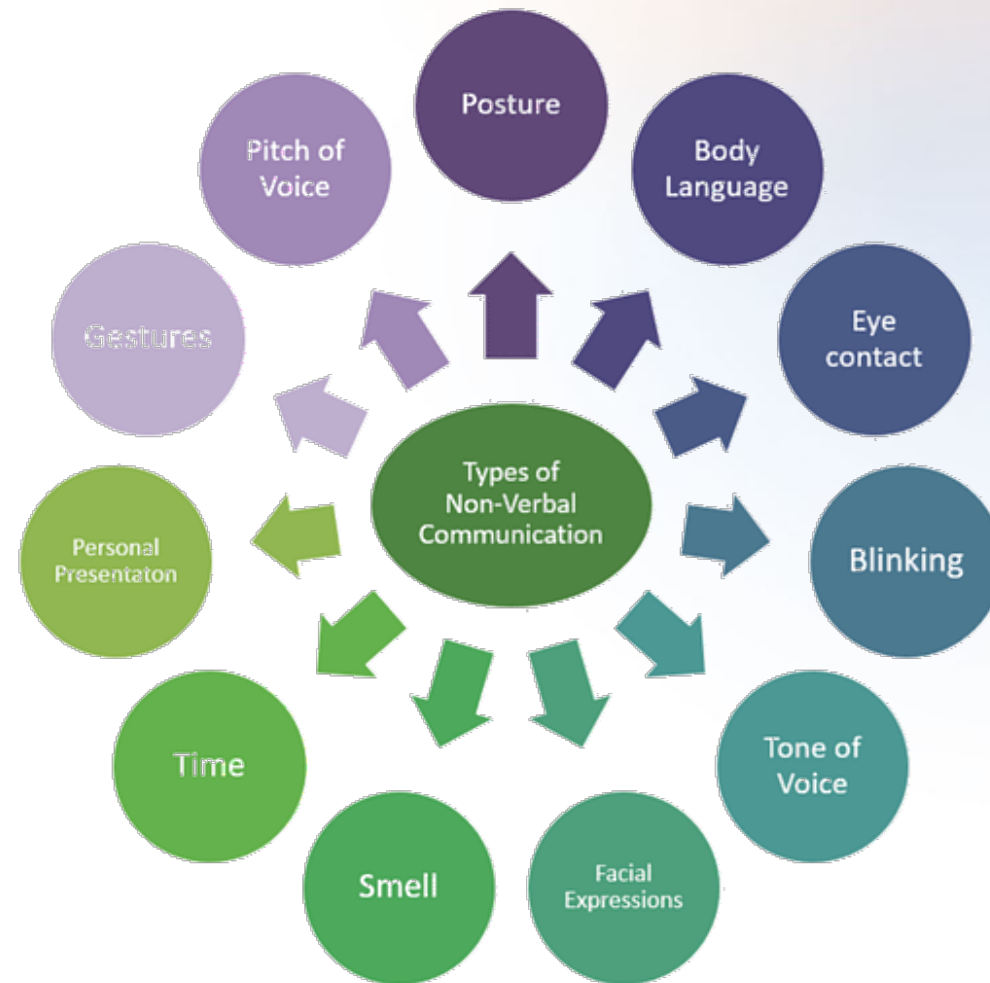


## 5 GOLDEN RULES OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION (DO'S)

1. **Active listening:** to understand the concerns and needs of your audience.
2. **Clarity:** clear and concise language to avoid misinterpretation.
3. **Empathy:** showing empathy can foster trust and rapport in health advocacy.
4. **Positive language:** Using positive and empowering language when discussing health issues.
5. **Non-verbal cues:** Very important and go hand in hand with verbal communication. Next slide



# NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND ITS ROLE





## DON'TS

- **Interrupting:** Avoid interrupting the speaker, as it can disrupt the flow of conversation and make them feel unheard.
- **Blaming or judging:** Refrain from making judgmental or accusatory statements. Instead, seek to understand and empathize.
- **Rambling:** Keep your messages concise and on point. Avoid going off on tangents that can confuse your audience.



## DON'TS

- **Defensiveness:** If you receive criticism, try not to get defensive. Instead, listen, acknowledge, and respond constructively.
- **Sarcasm or insults:** Never use sarcasm, insults, or derogatory language. It can harm relationships and damage trust.
- **Assuming:** Don't assume you know what someone is thinking or feeling. Ask for clarification if needed.



# ELEMENTS OF ADVOCACY COMMUNICATION

The essential elements for effective advocacy communication comprise:

- A clear vision
- SMART objectives aimed at solving the problem
- Extensive knowledge of whom your target audiences are.
- A compelling message tailored for the different stakeholders.



# ELEVATOR PITCH TECHNIQUE (ELEVATOR SPEECH)

- An elevator pitch, elevator speech, lift speech or elevator statement is a short description of an idea or product that explains the concept in a way such that any listener can understand it in a short period of time.
- The reason it's called an elevator pitch is that it should be short enough to present during a brief elevator ride. This speech is all about you: who you are, what you do, and what you are doing.



## 5 ELEVATOR PITCH IDEAS

- Outline the goal of your elevator pitch. You want to start by identifying the goal you're trying to achieve with your elevator pitch.
- Introduce yourself.
- Explain what you do.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Don't forget to follow-up.



# HOW TO PRESENT YOUR ADVOCACY STRATEGY IN 60 SECONDS

- Keep it simple, clear and concise. In a few strong sentences, summarise it all.
- Stand out from the crowd.
- Put yourself in the listeners' shoes.
- Adapt your speech.
- Be ready to answer tough questions.



# BENEFITS OF GOOD VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR PATIENTS

- It makes sharing information more efficient.
- Clear, honest communication between patient and provider paves the way for accurate diagnoses and treatment decisions.
- Enhanced patient safety and improved clinical performance.
- Improved patient satisfaction.
- Better results with your advocacy strategy.



# CONCLUSION

- You will need to have effective verbal communication skills even if it is only to talk to your doctor.
- Furthermore, verbal communication is crucial to convey any advocacy message and will help you achieve your desired results.
- Remember: if you want to make it happen you need to know how to convey the message.



*"If you just communicate, you can get by. But if you communicate skillfully, you can work miracles."*



## REFERENCES

- *Smith, J. (2020). Effective Verbal Communication in Healthcare Advocacy. Journal of Health Communication, 30(3), 245-259.*
- *Brown, M. (2019). The Power of Empathy in Health Advocacy. Health Advocacy Quarterly, 45(2), 123-137.*

**THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK!**



# Discussion panel and Q&A





# IMPROVING YOUR WRITTEN & ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## CLOSING REMARKS AND THANKS



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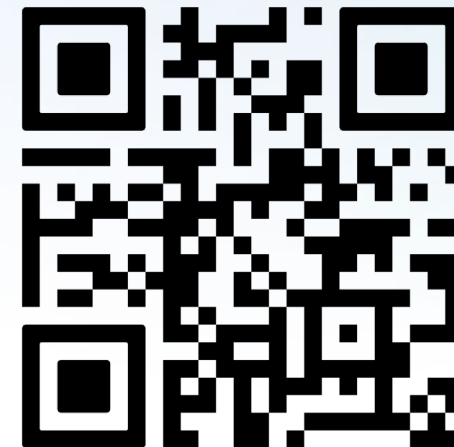
**ISAURE MERCIER**

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## CLOSING REMARKS AND THANKS

- The recording, slides and feedback questionnaire will be sent to all registrants in a few days.
- Please respond to the feedback questionnaire to help us improve future events.
- Send any questions you may have to [advocacy@idf.org](mailto:advocacy@idf.org).



*Images on slides 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34 and 36 designed by [Freepik](#)*

**Thank you!**

