

# TAKING THE STAGE® ENTERPRISE

## FACILITATOR GUIDE

VERSION 6.0

SPEAKING AS A LEADER®, TAKING THE STAGE®, LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS®, COMMUNICATION FOR THE SENIOR LEADER®, PROUD TO LEAD®, THE LEADER'S SCRIPT®, AND THE LEADERSHIP MODEL® ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF THE HUMPHREY GROUP INC.

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## Welcome to Taking the Stage®

Congratulations! You will be leading a group of your colleagues through the *Taking the Stage®* learning experience. This is an exciting opportunity to strengthen your own inclusive communication skills, and support the development of other women in your organization.

Throughout this train-the-trainer experience, you'll have the opportunity to share your own experiences, brainstorm solutions to a range of challenges, and delve into difficult topics as a group. In doing so, you will learn the skills to take the stage, and to help others do the same.

In addition to providing concrete communication tools, *Taking the Stage®* also deals with sensitive subject matter. Your discussions are likely going to spark questions about difficult topics like sexism and other forms of systemic inequity. These issues are explicitly raised in the live sessions you will be facilitating are an important space for questioning and exploring these topics. Some women will welcome the opportunity to have these conversations. Others might feel vulnerable or uncomfortable.

As a facilitator, it is your role to hold space for these discussions, and to make everyone feel safe and supported throughout the learning experience. This facilitator guide provides step-by-step guidelines to help you prepare for and lead the live sessions, and to support you in handling these sensitive conversations and addressing any challenging questions that come up.

Women tell us over and over again that they feel enormously enriched by this learning experience, and that they enjoy the opportunity to empower other women in their organization by leading these sessions. In various incarnations, *Taking the Stage®* has reached over 500,000 women globally, inspiring women in regions as diverse as North America, India, the Middle East, Europe, APAC, and Latin America. You're about to be part of that group.

I encourage you to put your own mark on this learning experience. Share your own stories to connect yourself to this material and help you inspire your participants in an authentic way. The outcome will be a transformational learning experience for you and the colleagues you inspire.

# What is Taking the Stage®?

For over 30 years, The Humphrey Group has focused exclusively on helping our clients influence and inspire through communication. We have also been long-standing champions of gender diversity in leadership. This commitment is rooted in our firm belief that equity, diversity, and inclusion are intrinsically valuable to society and that they serve the interests of business. This is supported by research that consistently shows how companies with more women in decision-making positions generate stronger market returns and superior profits.

Our firm was founded by Judith Humphrey, whose achievements have supported the advancement of women everywhere. In 2001, Judith created *Taking the Stage*®, a learning experience designed to empower women to position themselves as leaders every time they speak. While this program has remained focused on leadership communication, it has been updated over the years, evolving to reflect the realities that women face in an increasingly globalized business community.

The interactive digital learning experience you are about to embark on is our 2025 version of *Taking the Stage*®. The practical communication tools and strategies that made this learning experience famous are still at its core. Around this core we have used current research to add nuances to the content that reflects all the complexities that women navigate when they embrace leadership positions today.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the *Taking the Stage*® learning experience, participants will be able to:

- Embrace and communicate their leadership identity
- Identify mindsets and habits that do not serve their leadership goals
- Craft message-driven communication using a logical structure
- Effectively use language to their advantage
- Adopt a powerful vocal presence
- Achieve an authentic physical presence, both in-person and virtually
- Capitalize on conversations as leadership opportunities

## An Overview

*Taking the Stage®* consists of 4 sessions. By going through the following sessions with your facilitator and your cohort, you will develop the skills you need to communicate inspirationally, and to help other women do the same.

<p><b>Session 1</b></p> <p><b>Embrace Your Leadership Identity</b> looks at what it means to truly embrace leadership by shifting how you think and how you communicate.</p> <p>You will return to work with a new outlook on the role that communication plays in building your desired leadership identity.</p>	<p>You'll reflect on your leadership identity and ask yourself the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you think about your leadership right now?</li> <li>• How have gender norms shaped your ideas about leadership?</li> <li>• Does your communication reflect the leadership identity you wish to embody?</li> <li>• What holds you back from fully embracing the leadership identity you want?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session 2</b></p> <p><b>The Language of Leadership</b> will help you achieve clarity of thought and purpose and communicate in a way that demonstrates both to your audience.</p> <p>You will gain a tool you can apply to any communication where you need to persuade an audience.</p>	<p>You'll learn how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply a simple, repeatable methodology - the Leader's Script - to organize your thoughts.</li> <li>• Craft a key message, support it with the right amount of information, and provide a compelling call to action.</li> <li>• Examine your language habits to use words that inspire rather than simply inform.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session 3</b></p> <p><b>The Power of Presence</b> focuses on how to achieve the quality that draws people in and makes them pay attention when you speak.</p> <p>You will return to work with the skills and tools you need to confidently adopt a captivating presence in every situation-whether you are communicating in-person or virtually.</p>	<p>Key practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harnessing your authentic presence.</li> <li>• Using non-verbals like voice, body language, and eye contact to create a dynamic, authentic style.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session 4</b></p> <p><b>Inspiring Conversations</b> shows you how to use the Leader's Script in more informal communications, including conversations and conflict scenarios.</p> <p>You will leave feeling confident using the Script in a flexible way and embracing conflict as the leadership opportunity that it is.</p>	<p>Key techniques include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening actively and defusing conflict with a simple and effective technique.</li> <li>• Reinforcing the learnings from session 2.</li> </ul>

# Your Role as a Facilitator

## Defining Your Role

For many of you, this will be the first opportunity to facilitate a learning experience. The task can seem daunting. The following guidelines will help you be an effective facilitator.

**1** You don't have all the answers.

Your role is not to provide answers! Your role is to facilitate a healthy discussion of the concepts outlined in the content, and help participants brainstorm solutions based on the content provided and by sharing experiences.

**2** Don't control. Let it flow.

Let the discussion come forward from the participants - don't attempt to control it. Participants say that one of the greatest strengths of *Taking the Stage*® is the sharing among the individuals present. So let go, don't control, and let it flow.

**3** Share your own experiences.

Share your own stories - by doing so, you'll set an example of openness for everyone. Many participants have commented that they appreciate it when other women share stories of challenges they have faced or hard-won victories they can take credit for. You're in the facilitator role for a reason: you have lots to offer as a mentor and a guide.

**4** Be inclusive.

Include everyone in the discussion. You will find that some people will hold back. Make sure you make a point of inviting them into the conversation, so that everyone who wishes to speak has the chance to do so. Some people simply need an invitation to speak. At the same time, don't let any one person dominate. Let everyone have a voice.

Remember that perspectives will vary-there is no single experience of being a woman. It's not your job to homogenize the experience. It's ok that there will be contradictions and disagreements.



## 5 Hold space for skepticism and stress.

There may be individuals in your session who are skeptical about the need for a women-focused learning experience. Hold space for those thoughts and feelings. They are valid, and ought to be recognized as such. Then, find ways to gently lead the conversation back towards the present and towards concrete tools that *Taking the Stage*® offers.

## 6 Applaud honesty.

The topics you will be addressing are delicate. Not all people will feel comfortable sharing their experiences unless you create an environment where individuals are recognized for their honesty. Praise them for coming forward with these stories, for taking risks, and for trusting the group with their experiences. Praise others for listening without judgment.

## 7 Stay focused on the work.

There can be situations where the discussion derails. For example, a group can suddenly get locked into obsessing about the past, how girls were/are raised, how unfortunate that socialization was/is. Allow some time for this discussion if it arises. Then bring the focus back to the present. The primary focus of the live session should remain on using the tools offered to surmount obstacles while still acknowledging that external barriers exist that are out of our control.

## 8 Keep to the schedule.

Start the session on time and finish on time. Everyone will have other commitments, and you must respect them.

# Setting the Ground Rules

A critical component of your role as a facilitator is to set boundaries. The following ground rules will set you up for healthy and meaningful sessions.

These ground rules appear on a slide in the facilitator's deck that you can display when you go over them.

**RULE #1:** Everything spoken in the room is confidential. This is critical if you are to create an atmosphere of trust and openness.

**RULE #2:** Everybody has a contribution to make. This means that everyone should agree to listen to and hold space for others when they share their views.

**RULE #3:** Everyone commits to providing a supportive, safe environment for discussion. Sensitivity is paramount.

**RULE #4:** There will be no bashing. This includes bashing men, bashing our organization, or bashing anyone in the room. The goal is to be constructive.

**RULE #5:** During the session, participants should do their best to focus on the content and the discussion. Participants will have everything they need for the session provided to them. That said, it is important that you respect that some work may be pressing. If participants need to take a call in the case of an emergency, simply ask that they leave the room - that way they will be respectful of other participants.

# Setting the Agenda

## Structure:

Each session, including the program **Introduction** and **Conclusion**, is structured around The Leader's Script - which you will learn in Session 2: The Language of Leadership. You should also structure your speaking notes following the Leader's Script. By organizing your delivery in this way, you will become better acquainted with the Script as you facilitate, and you will model the practice you are teaching.

## Timing:

The lesson plan for each live session is time-stamped to help you stay within the 1.5-hour timeline. These are guidelines, and with experience facilitating you should feel comfortable altering this timeline based on the needs of your group.

## Customization:

Your organization may choose to customize certain aspects of the *Taking the Stage*® experience to suit the needs of the organization. For example, sessions can be compressed or lengthened. They can be delivered all together on one day, or spread out over a period of weeks. Your organization will make these decisions in consultation with The Humphrey Group's Design Team and you will learn about any customizations during your Train-the-trainer.

You're also encouraged to customize your delivery to draw upon your own experiences and additional resources you feel may enhance the content. By doing so, you will bring this learning experience to life for your group. You will have a chance to discuss this type of customization with your THG expert facilitator during the Train-the-trainer.

## General Logistics:

### How is Taking the Stage® rolled out?

The roll out is defined by the preferences of your company. *Taking the Stage*® is typically rolled out in two phases, the Train-the-trainer phase and the Enterprise roll out phase. First, the facilitators are identified. They experience the 4 sessions of the learning experience as participants and/or they attend the Train-the-Trainer, led by a THG expert facilitator. Then, when facilitators are ready, they lead participants through the 4-session learning experience themselves.

### Who facilitates Taking the Stage®?

*Taking the Stage*® is facilitated by experts from The Humphrey Group or facilitators certified by The Humphrey Group to deliver the learning experience in their own organizations. The facilitators are either volunteers or are nominated by their organizations. They are often natural leaders and who wish to mentor other women. Facilitators can represent a range of leaders from senior executives, to middle

managers, to HR and learning and development advisors. They need no previous training in facilitation nor do they need to be experts in the subject matter. All content is provided in the Train-the-Trainer experience that The Humphrey Groups provides.

## **Who attends?**

This depends on your organization's objectives. Companies select those who attend *Taking the Stage*®, often choosing high potential, emerging leaders, or established leaders on the executive track. Other firms open the program to all women-identifying employees.

## **Where are the sessions?**

Your organization may opt for a virtual or an in-person rollout. Details about how to organize the logistics of each are provided in this guide.

## **What do the teaching materials consist of and where are they kept?**

The individual(s) in your company who are coordinating the program will provide you with access to the materials. They include a Facilitator's slide deck and this Facilitator Guide.

## **Responsibilities in using the licensed material.**

Facilitators and participants are legally bound to maintain strict confidentiality in the use of the *Taking the Stage*® materials. Your organization has signed a contract with The Humphrey Group, specifying that the Facilitator Guide, The Facilitator Deck, and the Participant Guide "will not be copied or reproduced by any means" and are meant "solely for use by employees." This means you cannot create training materials, visuals, PowerPoint presentations, or "takeaways" that contain any of the content of the *Taking the Stage*® sessions, Facilitator Guide, Facilitator Deck or Participant Guide. You cannot share these materials, with anyone or any entity outside your company. From time to time, facilitators become enthusiastic about their experience with *Taking the Stage*® and want to share it with associates from other companies. If you have a friend or colleague who may be interested in observing a *Taking the Stage*® session for possible adoption by their company, please send your request to [contact@thehumphreygroup.com](mailto:contact@thehumphreygroup.com).

## SESSION 1

## Embrace Your Leadership Identity

## Session Overview

THEME	TOPIC	KEY PARTS	DURATION
INTRODUCTION 40 MIN	Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome participants.</li> <li>Introduce yourself using the Leader Script.</li> </ul>	20 MIN
	Play the Video: Introduction to Taking the Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play the Video: Introduction to Taking the Stage.</li> <li>Share personal story about you and TTS or your organization's commitment to developing female leaders.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Agenda & Ground Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the program agenda.</li> <li>Set the ground rules.</li> <li>Have participants introduce themselves.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
EMBRACE YOUR LEADERSHIP IDENTITY 130 MIN	Introduction to Leadership Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the concept of leadership identity.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Play Video: Embrace Your Leadership Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play Video: Embrace Your Leadership Identity.</li> <li>Ask participants what resonated with them about the video.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Video Debrief + Discussion: Leadership Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask participants what leadership means to them and what characteristics they associate with being a leader.</li> <li>Facilitate a discussion with the help of the list of probing questions.</li> <li>As part of this discussion include one or two (depending on time) short activities: Conviction and Reframing the Imposter.</li> </ul>	45 MIN
	Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants take a 15-minute break.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Brag or Vision Breakout Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do both or select one of the following exercises: Brag and/or Vision.</li> </ul>	20 MIN
	Debrief + Restated Message on Leadership Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debrief the Brag or Vision breakout exercise.</li> <li>Restate the session message on leadership identity.</li> </ul>	20 MIN
CLOSE 10 MIN	Call to Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide participants a call to action:</li> <li>Option A: To commit to highlight 1 of their accomplishments for themselves every week from now on.</li> <li>Option B: To share what they've learned with someone they trust.</li> <li>Option C: Ask participants to share their 1 takeaway.</li> </ul>	10 MIN

TOTAL TIME: 180 MIN

## INTRODUCTION

TOTAL DURATION:  
40 MIN

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants recognize how the 6 principles of mindset can help them embrace a leadership identity.

Participants can articulate 5 convictions that are core to their leadership identity.

## NOTES:

## WELCOME

20 MIN

## DO:

Welcome everyone.

Start with your bridge.

## SAY [BRIDGE EXAMPLE]:

Women continue to face unique challenges when they seek to lead. This doesn't mean that we've all had the same experiences. *Taking the Stage*® is about sharing and recognizing our complex and multifaceted identities. This program immerses you in a supportive space with other women. Together, we will strengthen the unique characteristics of your own personal leadership identity and explore how to overcome the particular barriers women in leadership face.

"Taking the Stage" means putting your authentic self front and center at work—by stepping into the spotlight and owning your role as a leader, no matter what job title or position you have.

## SAY:

Welcome to *Taking the Stage*®!

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am your facilitator for this learning experience.

## PLAY THE VIDEO: INTRODUCTION TO TAKING THE STAGE®

10 MIN

## BEFORE STARTING THE VIDEO

Tell participants that they are going to watch a video that introduces the context of the *Taking the Stage*® program and give background on The Humphrey Group – a leadership communications firm – that developed this program.

## PLAY THE VIDEO: INTRODUCTION TO TAKING THE STAGE®

Play the video:

<https://vimeo.com/1089143236?share=copy>

## AGENDA &amp; GROUND RULES

10 MIN

## DO:

Continue your Bridge: Share a personal story

**Option A: Provide a personal bridge.**

Say something about your personal experience in *Taking the Stage*® (e.g.: What was your biggest takeaway the first time you took the



For example, share your organization's ERGs, vision, mission statement, DEI work, CSR commitments, or other professional development initiatives.

## NOTES:

program as a participant? How has your leadership/communication changed since then? How did you come to be a facilitator for this program? What do you hope others will take from this experience?)

### Option B: Provide a factual bridge.

Say something about your organization's commitment to developing women leaders and explain how *Taking the Stage*® fits into these initiatives.

#### SAY: [SUBJECT]

*Taking the Stage*® is a leadership communication program created by women for women.

#### MESSAGE

When you take the stage, you thrive as a leader and empower others to maximize their full potential.

#### STRUCTURAL STATEMENT

What does it mean to take the stage? There are 4 steps, and we have one session devoted to each.

#### DO:

Share the agenda slide from the facilitator's deck and read through it.

#### AGENDA FOR THE PROGRAM:

Session 1: Embrace Your Leadership Identity

Session 2: The Language of Leadership

Session 3: The Power of Presence

Session 4: Inspiring Conversations

#### SAY:

There are a few ground rules for this program.

**Rule #1:** Everything spoken in the room is confidential. This is critical if you are to create an atmosphere of trust and openness.

**Rule #2:** Everybody has a contribution to make. This means that everyone should agree to share their views with others.

**Rule #3:** Everyone must commit to providing a supportive, safe environment for discussion. Sensitivity is paramount.

**Rule #4:** Disparaging remarks will not be permitted. This includes no: disparaging remarks towards others based on gender, on organizations/ companies, or towards any participant in this program. The goal is to be constructive.

#### DO: [INTRODUCTIONS]

Ask participants to share their name, role, and an area of their communication that they want to improve on.

Ask if there are questions about logistics/schedule/materials now.

# EMBRACE YOUR LEADERSHIP IDENTITY

TOTAL DURATION:  
75 MIN



## IN THIS SECTION

Explain the importance of embracing a leadership identity.

Acknowledge the challenges women face in leadership.

## INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP IDENTITY

15 MIN

### SAY:

Today's session covers step 1: Embracing a leadership identity.

Being an inspiring leader starts with embracing this identity for yourself. This is difficult for everyone. Being a leader is hard. And there are particular challenges and barriers for women.

## PLAY THE VIDEO: EMBRACE YOUR LEADERSHIP IDENTITY

15 MIN

### BEFORE STARTING THE VIDEO

Before starting the video, activate participant engagement by asking:

**Question:** "Identify one thing in the video that resonates with you."

Ask participants to be ready to share their thoughts during the discussion to follow.

### PLAY THE VIDEO: EMBRACE YOUR LEADERSHIP IDENTITY



Play the video:

<https://vimeo.com/1089142444>



There are no right or definitive answers. Rather, the answers will be found within the experience of the participants.

Validate participant's responses. When someone mentions something that will be covered in this program (i.e. speaking and being heard, not being interrupted in meetings, leading teams, confidence or lack thereof, sexism in the workplace, etc.) tell them that this will be addressed in this program.

## VIDEO DEBRIEF + DISCUSSION: LEADERSHIP IDENTITY

45 MIN

### DO:

You can now move to a series of probing questions. During this time, integrate the group exercise on **Convictions** and **Reframing the Imposter**.

### Among the questions you can ask are the following:

- Share one thing in the video that resonated with you.
- What does leadership mean to you?
- What characteristics do you associate with being a leader?
- Which principle (Vision, Conviction, Information to Inspiration, Courage, Everyday, or Audience-Centered) resonated most with you? Which principle needs to be more apparent in your leadership identity?
- Which of the elements of mindset do you think you need to work on the most right now?
- Where do you need to communicate vision more clearly in your day-to-day work?



## NOTES:




Also point out (if it doesn't come up) that women are a diverse group and we don't all face the same challenges.



Incorporate one or both exercises into this discussion and debrief with the group after.

Explain to the group that the "Reframing the Imposter" exercise is about challenging the negative self-talk that can permeate our thoughts, ideas, and communications. It is not about suppressing negative emotions, but about changing perspective - by zeroing in on the mindsets and habits that do not serve leadership goals.

- What business situations make you most uncomfortable? Why?
- What is your comfort level with conflict? What are your beliefs about conflict that may need to be reshaped to better serve your leadership?
- What aspects of your work would be improved if you showed more courage? What's stopping you from practicing courage now? How could you change your mindset to begin practicing courage more regularly in your work? What role does self-esteem play in your ability to show courage?
- Who are the people or audiences that are important to your success? How do you consider them in your communications?

### DO:

Be sure to point out that leadership is not gendered – good leadership skills are good leadership skills, regardless of gender.

The difference is that women often face specific obstacles and biases that are gendered. These are often challenges to embracing these leadership skills or different consequences when they embody these traits.

### ASK:

- What does it mean to embrace the characteristics we have listed?
- What is different/particularly challenging about embracing a leadership identity as a woman?
- Have you experienced challenges related to gender?

### DO:

#### Convictions Group Exercise:

When the principle of conviction comes up in discussion, give everyone 3 quiet minutes to write down 3-5 convictions. Have each participant share the one they like the most with the group.

### AND/OR

#### Reframing The Imposter Exercise:

This is an exercise in reframing our perspective. Give everyone approximately 3 quiet minutes. Ask participants to write down a negative framing statement they might hold about themselves. Afterwards, ask them to write a positive conviction statement that reframes this. Tell participants to be ready to share these with the group. Example: Frame - "I got this position because of luck." Reframing statement - "I got this position because of hard work and determination."

## BREAK

15 MIN

Take a 15-minute break.



## IN THIS SECTION

Do both or select one of the following exercises:  
**Brag AND/OR Vision.**

The practice of bragging or sharing visions helps participants become more comfortable with self-promotion and articulating the skills they possess.

## NOTES:

## BRAG OR VISION BREAKOUT EXERCISE

20 MIN

**Option 1. Brag (Breakout Exercise):****DO:**

Split participants up into groups of 2-3 or have participants share their brag to the larger group.

**SAY:**

I would like you to do an exercise – bragging! For many of us, it's easy to come up with positive convictions about others – about our teams, our managers, our direct reports. But, for many of us, it's a lot more difficult to come up with positive convictions about ourselves. Many of us are very uncomfortable bragging. And we shouldn't be – it should be just as easy to say positive things about ourselves as it is to say them about others. So that's what we're going to practice now – bragging about ourselves.

I want you all to take turns speaking for 60 seconds. During this time, you are **ONLY** allowed to say positive things about yourself. Rotate around the room and repeat until the time is up.

While you speak, your colleagues will listen to you. And when your minute is up, I want them to tell you if it sounded like bragging... or did it just sound confident and factual?

**DO:**

- Take any questions about this exercise now.
- If you are choosing small group settings, split the participants into groups of 2-3 people now.

**AND/OR****Option 2. Vision (Breakout Exercise):****DO:**

When the principle of vision comes up in discussion tell participants you are going to pair them up for an exercise on vision—thinking about the vision they have for their leadership.

**SAY:**

I will now pair you up in teams of 2.

In your groups I would like you to share a vision statement OR share with your partner where you see yourself heading in your career, in this organization, outside of this organization, as a leader in general, etc.

I want you all to take turns sharing for about 5 minutes each. When you're listening, your job is to ask questions that encourage your partner to elaborate and keep speaking.

## NOTES:

## DEBRIEF + RESTATED MESSAGE ON LEADERSHIP IDENTITY

20 MIN

**DO:**

Ask participants to report back on how the exercise went.

**ASK:**

- Was bragging difficult? Did it feel uncomfortable? (And/Or)
- How did it feel for the people listening to you brag? (And/Or)
- How did it feel to hear your partner's vision? To share your own?

**DO:**

Reinforce that embracing your leadership identity means seeing yourself as a leader and that involves being comfortable talking about your achievements and your ideas without undermining yourself or making them or yourself smaller.

**DO:**

At this time, take any questions about this exercise, or anything else covered today.

**SAY [RESTATED SESSION MESSAGE ON LEADERSHIP IDENTITY]**

To influence and inspire through communication, you must embrace your leadership identity.

I hope the exercises we've done today have helped you think about your leadership identity as it is at this moment, and where you want to take it.

**DO:**

Transition to the topic of the Leader's Script.

**SAY:**

For the remainder of the day, we'll focus on the Leader's Script.

## CLOSE

TOTAL DURATION:  
10 MIN

## IN THIS SECTION

Encourage participants to continue developing their leadership identity.

## NOTES:

## CALL TO ACTION

10 MIN

## SAY:

There are two call-to-actions for this session.

**Choose from the following examples or customize based on what happened in your session:**

**Option A:**

Tell participants that to get better at embracing their leadership identity, they should commit to highlighting 1 of their accomplishments for themselves every week from now on.

**Option B:**

Tell participants to share what they learned in the exercises with someone they trust (a spouse, friend, colleague, etc.). Also, tell them to share the updated positive self-talk that they are committed to engaging in.

**Option C:**

Ask everyone to share 1 takeaway from the session.

## SESSION 2

# The Language of Leadership

## Session Overview

OVERVIEW	TOPIC	SESSION OVERVIEW	DURATION
INTRODUCTION (5 MIN)	Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a personal story about a communication opportunity; OR</li> <li>Recap the mindset discussion from the previous session.</li> <li>Provide an overview of the upcoming session.</li> </ul>	5 MIN
LEADER'S SCRIPT & BREAK (145 MIN)	Play the Video: The Leader's Script and The Language of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play the video.</li> <li>Have participants have their Leader's Script Template ready.</li> </ul>	35 MIN
	Video Debrief + Discussion: The Leader's Script and The Language of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask a series of probing questions about the video.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Review The Leader's Script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Leader Script.</li> <li>Encourage participants to ask questions about the Script.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Review a Sample Leader's Script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review a Leader Script example.</li> <li>Emphasize the importance of tailoring the script to audience and context.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants take a 15-minute break.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Review Subject and Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants will draft subject and message.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Feedback on Subject and Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants present back their subject and message and receive feedback.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Review Structural Statement, Body, and Restated Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants will draft their structural statement, body, and restated message. Provide feedback.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Review Call to Action and Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants will draft a call to action and bridge.</li> <li>Have participants share and provide feedback.</li> </ul>	30 MIN
LANGUAGE (25 MIN)	How Language Can Undermine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss jargon and weak language.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	How Language Can Inspire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cover the 4 principles of language that demonstrate leadership.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
CLOSE (5 MIN)	Call to Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants will share how their scripts has developed.</li> </ul>	5 MIN

TOTAL TIME: 180 MIN

## INTRODUCTION

TOTAL DURATION:  
5 MIN

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants can create persuasive, inspiring, and audience-centered messages.

Participants can create bridges, calls to action, and structure data points to support their messages.



Highlight the benefit of the Leader's Script as a tool to help you communicate with clarity and intention.



You can also share the Leader's Script Template in the chat.



Play the video:

<https://vimeo.com/1089141581>

## WELCOME

5 MIN

## Option A:

Begin by sharing a personal story about a time when you were not prepared for an important communication opportunity. Include why or how you've worked to improve your preparation. Be sure to cover the impact your preparation had.

OR

## Option B:

Recap the mindset discussion from the last session and explain that preparation allows you to make your communication more audience-centered (the last mindset principle!).

SAY:

This session will introduce you to The Leader's Script and the Language of Leadership.

By applying these tools, you'll be able to capitalize on every leadership opportunity to communicate with clarity and intention.

## THE LEADER'S SCRIPT

TOTAL DURATION:  
130 MIN

## PLAY THE VIDEO: THE LEADER'S SCRIPT AND THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP

35 MIN

## BEFORE STARTING THE VIDEO

Let's start by watching a short video followed by some discussion questions. Before we start, I want everyone to pull out The Leader's Script Template.

If you haven't thought of an upcoming communication opportunity yet, you should do that while watching the video so that you have a practical example to work on during this session.

In this video, there will be several pauses where you will be guided to fill out specific sections of the Script. Don't worry about getting each section perfect, we will continue to write out your example after the video.

After watching the video, we will debrief it, and then continue to work on your own example.

## PLAY THE VIDEO: THE LEADER'S SCRIPT AND THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP



## IN THIS SECTION

Ask probing questions about how participants' scripts portray their leadership to help participants internalize these concepts and consider how to apply them to their own leadership and communication styles.

This conversation should focus on exploring how language habits that may undermine leadership, and the challenges in communicating clearly and positively.



## IN THIS SECTION

Display The Leader's Script template for participants while you are talking and review each component: Bridge, Subject, Message, Structural Statement, Body, Restated Message, and Call to Action.

Encourage participants to ask questions about the Leader's Script.

## VIDEO DEBRIEF + DISCUSSION: THE LEADER'S SCRIPT AND THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP

10 MIN

## DO:

You can now move to a series of probing questions. There are no right or definitive answers. Rather, the answers will be found within the experience of the participants. Among the questions you can ask are the following.

**In what you have drafted so far during the video:**

- How do you think your scripts portray your leadership?
- In your scripts, do you portray yourself as more of a “doer” than a leader?
- When do you find it most difficult to communicate in a clear and organized fashion? Why?
- The Humphrey Group teaches that a strong message is a positive message, or one that highlights opportunity. Why is this challenging? What strategies can you adopt to stay positive in your messaging?
- What language habits do you rely on unintentionally that don't showcase your leadership? Do you have any insights into why you may fall into these language traps?
- How do you think others perceive you when you use minimizing language?

## REVIEW THE LEADER'S SCRIPT

10 MIN

## DO:

Display the Leader's Script template and explain the following:

**Explain when to use The Leader's Script**

- When you want to persuade, influence, or inspire an audience.

**Explain how to use it**

- It's scalable for many different opportunities – you can stretch it or shorten it, as needed.

**Explain why you use it**

- For message-driven communication that puts your ideas front and center.

## NOTES:

## DO:

Review each component using the following talking points:

### BRIDGE

- The bridge to your audience. It sets the stage for what you're about to talk about. It leads directly to your subject and message. It can be a personal story or anecdote, a fact or data point that is relevant to what you want to talk about, etc.

### SUBJECT

- The topic you want to talk about. It is neutral and objective. No one should be able to disagree with your subject because it's not an opinion or an argument. It sounds like "Today, we will discuss..." or "I want to talk to you about..." or "This meeting is to go over..."

### MESSAGE

- This is your argument. It's the one key thing you want your audience to take away from your communication. It sounds like "I believe..." or "I am convinced..."

### STRUCTURAL STATEMENT

- A high-level overview of the evidence in the body. It sets the agenda for what comes next and tells your audience what type of evidence/data to expect.

### BODY

- Here is where you share the data/evidence that supports your message.

### RESTATED MESSAGE

- A reminder about the key takeaway (message).

### CALL TO ACTION

- The next steps. It tells your audience how to turn your Message into a reality.





## IN THIS SECTION

Provide a concrete example of the Leader's Script in action. Mention that the example you are about to give is a truncated version.

Emphasize the importance of tailoring the script to the audience and context.

## NOTES:

## REVIEW A SAMPLE LEADER'S SCRIPT

10 MIN

DO:

Share a Leader's Script example:

### Sample Script

Tanya is a senior analyst in credit at a large bank's head office in Toronto. She was asked to prepare a 3-minute overview of the new approach the bank is taking to student lending for the marketing team at their upcoming planning meeting. Tanya knew that this audience was looking for a better understanding of how to target their upcoming student lending campaigns and presented the following script:

### Bridge

In preparation for this meeting, I sat down with my nephew who is in his first year at the University of Toronto. Within minutes, he painted a picture for me of the students. Students these days expect things to happen for them at the speed of light. They are used to finding information within two clicks, getting stuff done in the time it takes to download and interact with an app, and don't need or want face-to-face connections with every institution they deal with. In fact, they don't have time for it.

### Subject

Today I want to talk to you about marketing to students.

### Message

Our marketing efforts must convey to students that using our products will be an easy, quick, and faceless process.

### Structural Statement

There are three benefits to this:

### Body

Easy – demonstrate how students will find info and apply for products

Quick – share target time of 24-hour approval for student lending products

Faceless – show interactive app designed to move students through application, signing and ongoing access to products without ever entering a branch or speaking to a representative

### Call to Action

You are the team that will translate our new approach into marketing efforts that will attract this unique audience. For next week's town hall, please come prepared to share how you can make this part of your marketing plan starting this January.

## BREAK

15 MIN

Take a 15-minute break.



## IN THIS SECTION

Encouraging participants to think of a real communication opportunity makes the learning practical and relevant and ensures they can immediately apply their learning to their own contexts.



## IN THIS SECTION

Ensure that participants' subject is neutral and message is positive.

Encourage peer feedback to reinforce learning.

Tip: Focusing on subject and message first helps participants anchor their scripts. These elements are foundational and getting them right makes it easier to develop the rest of the script.



Share the slide with the criteria for a good message on it to help guide the feedback.

## REVIEW SUBJECT AND MESSAGE

10 MIN

Explain that subject and message are the starting points for creating a Leader's Script.

So as you go through each component, you will notice that you are not going in order of how they appear in the template – this is intentional.

Once you have the subject and message, it makes it easier to fill out the rest.

Give everyone 10 minutes to complete writing an example of a subject and message.

## FEEDBACK ON SUBJECT AND MESSAGE

10 MIN

## DO:

Ask for a volunteer to share their subject and message. Provide feedback.

As you're listening, make sure:

- The **subject is neutral** (i.e. it does not take a position on an issue – it merely states a topic for this communication).
- The **message is positive** (i.e. even if the situation or topic being addressed is negative/problematic, the message should be positive because it provides a solution).

## Reinforce teachings about message as needed, for example:

- Message is the most important part of the Script.
- If your audience remembers nothing else from your communication, they should at least remember your message.
- Everything else in the Script exists to support the message.
- The message should be positive because it provides a solution (the problem can go in the bridge; the message must propose a solution to it.).
- The message should be short, no longer than 1 sentence, so that audiences can remember it easily.

## DO:

After you have given feedback to 1-2 people, invite others to provide feedback. Emphasize that giving others feedback is a great way to reinforce your learning.

Correct or add to the feedback as needed. If needed, give everyone approximately 5 minutes to finalize their subject and message.

## NOTES:




Emphasize the relationship between Bridge and Message.

A Bridge is not an ice-breaker. It's related to your Message and sets you up to deliver your Message.

## REVIEW STRUCTURAL STATEMENT, BODY, AND RESTATED MESSAGE

15 MIN

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Give everyone 15 minutes to complete writing their examples of a structural statement, their body, and their restated message.

After you have given feedback to 1-2 people, invite others to provide feedback.

## REVIEW CALL TO ACTION AND BRIDGE

30 MIN

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Give everyone 20 minutes to write the Call to Action and Bridge.

### DO:

Ask participants to share their Calls to Action for their scripts. Provide feedback on whether the Calls to Action are Concrete, Time-Stamped, and Assigned.

Then ask participants to share their Bridge examples and provide feedback.

Tell participants that Bridges are their chance to connect with their audience and prime them to receive their message.

Use the example Scripts in this facilitator guide to provide examples of Bridges. You can share the examples on your screen if you wish so that people can see them as you are reading them.

If there's time, ask for a second volunteer.

## LANGUAGE

TOTAL DURATION:  
25 MIN

### IN THIS SECTION

Highlight how language can undermine leadership and how to avoid these pitfalls.

## HOW LANGUAGE CAN UNDERMINE

15 MIN

### SAY:

To "Take the Stage", we must choose the Language of Leadership.

Let's take a look at how language can undermine our leadership, and then we'll explore how to inspire our audiences with the words we choose.

### ASK:

- Can you think of any examples where language might undermine how you're perceived as a leader?
- What are some dos and don'ts of language, pet peeves about jargon (including business jargon) and cringe-worthy language?

Listen and comment on responses.

## NOTES:




Introducing the concept of The Double Bind and how it affects women in leadership can help participants understand the unique challenges women face in leadership communication.

## SAY:

There are several ways that language can influence how we are perceived as leaders.

Here are 3 ways language can undermine how you are perceived as a leader:

1. Language that impresses rather than inspires.
2. Language that confuses rather than enlightens.
3. Language that weakens rather than empowers.

## SAY:

### 1. Language that impresses rather than inspires.

- Too often, we can use overly complex language to appear more intelligent than our audience.
- Our desire to sound authoritative by using multi-syllabic words, corporate jargon or overly technical vocabulary can backfire, alienating our audience.
- Phrases like “synergizing our strategic matrix to leverage and optimize growth and enhance our responsive transitional mobility” do little to inspire.

### 2. Language that confuses rather than enlightens.

- Often, our words can confuse listeners by raising more questions than answers.
- The use of acronyms. These may be a time-saver, but often our audiences are left in the dark.
- Language that obscures the truth. Leaders should never hide behind vague language when having to deliver difficult messages. For example, “Modernized”, “Right-sized”, “Re-allocated”, “Down-sized” are all vague terms used to lay off employees.
- Clichés and bad metaphors. “We’ll play a brokering role.” “We’re boiling the ocean here,” “At the end of the day”, “win-win”, “think outside the box”, “circle back,” “going forward.” These tired phrases don’t enlighten.

### 3. Language that weakens rather than empowers.

- Structural and cultural factors often encourage women to adopt language that downplays their confidence and undermines self-promotion.
- Many women feel they must choose between being confident or being liked, and as a result, they adopt “weak” or “minimizing” language patterns that diminish their leadership.
- This is called The Double Bind.
- Women we work with often fear that by adopting stronger language habits they will be seen as arrogant or dictatorial.

## NOTES:

### Here are some examples of weak language:

- Asking permission to speak: "Would it be okay if I added something here?" "Do you mind if I ask a question?"
- Apologizing too much: "I'm sorry, but..." "Forgive me, but I disagree...."
- Posing questions when the answers are known: "Don't you think we should explore..."
- Using modifiers that weaken the tone: "I have a bit of an idea...I'm just wondering if maybe..."
- Favouring softer verbs: "I think..." "I'm wondering..." "I'm hoping that...."
- Using prefatory qualifiers that undercut credibility: "I know I only have one year of experience..." "This might be a bad idea, but...."
- Adopting caveats after making a strong statement or a request: "... but I could be missing something...."
- Using emotional words: "I feel ..." "I'm afraid that..." "I'm concerned that..."
- Sounding overly grateful: "WOW...That's incredible! Thank you so much!"

### SAY:

- These language habits are common to the women we work with. While none of these habits are inherently negative, they create impressions of your leadership that may not serve you.
- We believe you can use the Language of Leadership without compromising the qualities you value.

## HOW LANGUAGE CAN INSPIRE

10 MIN

### SAY:

The following four language principles will allow you to demonstrate your leadership every time you communicate.

### DO:

Display the 4 principles.

### SAY:

Here are some ways language can inspire:

#### 1. Use conversational language.

- When you speak, use simple language so that your ideas can be heard.
- Keep your words and sentences short.
- Use contractions like "I'm" or "I've" rather than the more formal "I am" or "I have."



## IN THIS SECTION

Display the four principles of inspiring language.

## NOTES:



### 2. Personalize your language

- Own your ideas. Use the word “I” to show your commitment to the ideas being presented. Tell the audience “I’m convinced...” or “I firmly believe....”
- Tell stories that bring your ideas to life. These can be drawn from your own experience, or from that of your employees or family.

### 3. Use concise language

- Eliminate any jargon.

### 4. Use confident language.

- Use strong verbs. “I will”, “We must”, “I’m convinced”, “I believe”, “I’m confident”
- Eliminate apologies, asking permission, and prefatory statements.
- Choose original metaphors.

The Leader’s Script is a tool that identifies your message and structures your thinking. But this isn’t enough. You must convey your ideas with language that is strong and clear.

## CLOSE

TOTAL DURATION:  
5 MIN



## IN THIS SECTION

Encourage participants to reflect on their Leader’s Script and ensure it portrays their leadership.

## CALL TO ACTION

5 MIN

### SAY:

Whenever you finish a Leader’s Script, ask yourself this question:

- Does your Script portray your leadership?

### DO:

Ask for a few volunteers to share how their script has developed over the course of this session, and to what extent it now showcases their leadership identity.

## SESSION 3

## The Power of Presence

## Session Overview

OVERVIEW	TOPIC	SESSION OVERVIEW	DURATION
INTRODUCTION (5 MIN)	Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the session on presence.</li> </ul>	5 MIN
ACHIEVE THE VOICE OF A LEADER (40 MIN)	Play the Video: Achieve the Voice of a Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play the video: Achieve the Voice of a Leader.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Video Debrief: Achieve the Voice of a Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debrief using the questions provided.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Voice Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the 6 voice strategies.</li> <li>Practice 1 or more voice exercises as a group.</li> <li>Pay particular attention to vocal fry and upspeak as illustrated in the video.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
LEADERSHIP PRESENCE (130 MIN)	Play the Video: Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play the Video: Presence.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Leadership Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the topic of presence.</li> </ul>	5 MIN
	Identifying the Elements of Leadership Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw out discussion on the 4 elements of leadership presence: Body language, eye contact, pace, and expression.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Discussion: Leadership Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask participants a series of probing questions on presence.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Presence Exercises and Demo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demo body language, eye contact, pace, and expression with participant volunteers.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants take a 15-minute break.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Individual Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants will deliver their scripts.</li> <li>Participants should be recorded.</li> <li>Participants then will receive coaching from the facilitator and additional feedback from the audience.</li> </ul>	60 MIN
CLOSE (5 MIN)	Restated Message + Call to Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a restated message.</li> <li>Invite participants to watch future recordings of themselves that they can do before a presentation.</li> </ul>	5 MIN

TOTAL TIME: 180 MIN

## INTRODUCTION

TOTAL DURATION:  
5 MIN

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants can use body language, eye contact, pace, and expression to engage audiences, both virtually and in-person.

Participants can use volume, pitch, emphasis, and tone to make their voices powerful and engaging in both in-person and virtual environments.

## WELCOME

5 MIN

## SUBJECT

This session is on leadership presence.

## MESSAGE

By harnessing the power of your presence and voice, you will embody your leadership identity in every communication opportunity.

## STRUCTURAL STATEMENT

In this session, like in our previous sessions, I will play a video and then we will debrief it. Afterwards, we will do a series of exercises that have you step into and embody the leadership identity you want to showcase.

## ACHIEVE THE VOICE OF A LEADER

TOTAL DURATION:  
40 MIN

Emphasize that presence is a skill that can be learned.

Play the video:

<https://vimeo.com/1089140808>

## PLAY THE VIDEO: ACHIEVE THE VOICE OF A LEADER

15 MIN

## BEFORE STARTING THE VIDEO

Prior to starting the video, activate participant engagement by asking participants to reflect on instances where they may have felt their voice was unheard or undervalued in professional settings.

## PLAY THE VIDEO: ACHIEVE THE VOICE OF A LEADER

## VIDEO DEBRIEF: ACHIEVE THE VOICE OF A LEADER

10 MIN



There are no right or definitive answers. Rather, the answers will be found within the experience of the participants.

Discussing personal relationships with voice helps participants identify areas for improvement and build a more positive self-perception.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

You can now ask a series of probing questions, such as:

- Do you ever feel like you have lost your voice, or don't have a voice?
- What is your current relationship with your voice? Is it a positive or negative relationship?
- What is the main factor that keeps you from speaking up in high-stakes meetings?
- Do you ever feel out of breath when you're speaking? Why do you think this is?
- Using your notes is critical to developing vocal presence. Do you ever fall into the monotone trap?





## IN THIS SECTION

Depending on time, choose 1 or more exercises to complete with the group.

Exercises like "Box Breathing" help participants manage stress and improve their ability to communicate effectively under pressure.

## NOTES:

## VOICE EXERCISES

15 MIN

## SAY:

Let's review the six voice strategies. Next, we'll learn and practice some voice exercises.

REFER TO THE HANDOUT IN YOUR PARTICIPANT GUIDE AND THE DECK.

**Exercise 1: Box Breathing**

The goal of boxed breathing is to bring the respiratory system back into alignment and end the shallow breathing that results from the fight or flight response mode the body enters when feeling stressed.

**Step 1** - Close your mouth and breathe in slowly through your nose.

**Step 2** - Count to four as you inhale. Hold your breath for four seconds.

**Step 3** - Open your mouth slightly and slowly exhale to a count of four.

**Step 4** - Hold after the exhale to another count of four.

Ideally, you should repeat the exercise four times. This will help you to achieve a more relaxed state, relieve tension and settle your nerves.

**Exercise 2: Use All of Your Notes**

The goal is to encourage the participants to explore their voices' range and tone as tools to engage their audiences.

**Step 1** – Let participants know this exercise is a volume exercise focusing on pitch variation. Counting from 1 to 5, and using hand gestures as a guide, this exercise explores a range of tones from high to low. Your task in doing this exercise is to reach as low and high as you comfortably can. (Demonstrate first with an example, and then do exercise with participants.)

**Step 2** - Debrief the exercise by asking the large group the following: How did it feel to use your voice like that and to hear such a range?

**Exercise 3: Enunciate to Inspire**

The goal is to encourage participants to enunciate their words to engage their audiences.

**Step 1** - Ask participants to retrieve their own Leader Script examples.

**Step 2** - Demonstrate the activity by using a pen to enunciate the course subject "*Taking the Stage*®" and message "To be seen as a leader you need to take the stage".

**Step 3** - Pair up the participants and instruct each participant to read their subject and message to each other with their pen in their mouth

**Step 4** - Debrief the exercise by asking the large group the following:

- How did it feel to enunciate like that?
- Was it a challenge? If it was challenging it is indication that participants need to consider enunciating more to ensure clarity and conviction in their voices.

## LEADERSHIP PRESENCE

TOTAL DURATION:  
55 MIN

Play the video:

<https://vimeo.com/1089140160>

## PLAY THE VIDEO: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

15 MIN

PLAY THE VIDEO: THE POWER OF PRESENCE



## IN THIS SECTION

Introducing the discussion on presence with clear principles helps participants understand what presence is and how it can be achieved.

## LEADERSHIP PRESENCE

5 MIN

SAY:

Now let's turn to the subject of presence more closely.

DO:

Begin by sharing a personal story of your own presence and how you have developed it over time. Ensure that your story has a specific reference to some elements of your physical presence including body language, eye contact, pace and/or expression.

SAY:

We are going to discuss what presence is and how people achieve it, and distill that process down into a really clear set of principles.

We'll do some group exercises to embody these principles.

Then we'll breakout so you can practice using your Script.

The one thing I want you to take away from our discussion on presence is that presence is a skill that can be learned.



## IN THIS SECTION

This could be a leader, a public figure, a colleague—anyone who the participant thinks really “holds the room.”

## IDENTIFYING THE ELEMENTS OF LEADERSHIP PRESENCE

10 MIN

ASK:

- Whose presence do you admire?

DO:

Lead a group discussion, soliciting as many contributions as you can.

ASK:

- If you had to try to pin down what these people on our list **do** to hold the room or create connection or keep people interested, what would you point out?

## NOTES:




## IN THIS SECTION

There are no right or definitive answers. Rather, the answers will be found within the experience of the participants.

Sharing experiences helps participants learn from each other and realize that they are not alone in their challenges. It builds a supportive community within the group.

## DO:

Be sure to draw out of the discussion/highlight when people mention each of the 4 elements of leadership presence:

- Body language
- Eye contact
- Pace
- Expression

## SAY:

Presence is a quality ascribed to a person who can connect with their audience in a way that holds their attention.

They are literally present in the sense of being “in the moment” and focused on the words and ideas they are delivering.

As a result, the audience connects with them.

This ability to engage the audience and compel them to listen creates a connection that is essential for all leaders.

It ensures the audience is able to receive ideas in a way that inspires them.

## DISCUSSION: LEADERSHIP PRESENCE

10 MIN

## DO:

You can now ask a series of probing questions, such as:

- In what situations do you have difficulty achieving a powerful leadership presence?
- In what business situations are you best able to physically express confidence and leadership when you speak?
- How might some of you have been encouraged by your environment and social interactions to act in ways that undercut your physical presence? How might some of you have been encouraged to develop a strong presence?
- Have you been given feedback that you come across as aggressive, instead of assertive? Is this a concern you have when speaking up? How can you use expression to ensure you are coming across as assertive when using strong language, as opposed to aggressive?
- In what situations are you grounded in your body language? What situations challenge you to be grounded?
- Where and do you struggle to make effective eye contact?
- What pace is habitual for you? Consider if this pace is appropriate for your audience.



## IN THIS SECTION

Demonstrating the concepts with volunteers makes the learning more concrete and relatable.

It provides real-time feedback and examples for participants to learn from.

## NOTES:

## PRESENCE EXERCISES AND DEMO

15 MIN

## Body Language

## SAY:

Body language is a great way to bring dynamism to your speaking style.

In-person, we tell people to hold their arms around the middle of their body, keep space between their hands, and use gestures to emphasize key ideas.

We tell people to stand up to bring more energy to their delivery (but to be careful not to pace).

Let's briefly discuss how things are different virtually and in-person:

## ASK:

What are some of the differences you experience when delivering virtually?

Look for these answers and incorporate them if they aren't brought up.

- Maintaining stillness on camera is important.
- Depending on how you are framed, gestures or movement of your hands/arms can be very distracting/awkward.
- Most of the time we are framed such that our bodies are only visible from the chest up.

## ASK:

Can I have a volunteer to make this concrete?

## DO:

Ask the volunteer to speak for 30 seconds. They can share what they did on the weekend, what their role/team/function does at their company, or what movie/tv show/book they have enjoyed recently.

After they are done speaking, point out what they are doing with body language that is working and what can be improved.

Make suggestions for how they could better (review the presence checklist from the digital materials in advance so you are familiar with THG's recommended best practices).

## Eye Contact

## SAY:

In person, we would tell you to look at the person you are speaking to.

**What happens virtually?** Virtually, we have to do something that is not at all intuitive— we have to look into our camera. This creates the feeling of eye contact for our audience.

## ASK:

Can I have a volunteer to demonstrate?

## NOTES:



### DO:

Ask the volunteer to share a summary of a recent project they worked on that they enjoyed.

Provide feedback on how they use eye contact.

### DO:

Demonstrate what it looks like to maintain eye contact for the length of an idea.

Demonstrate the “up down up” (eye contact at the beginning and end of an idea when reading or when the idea is long).

## Pace

### SAY:

Our pace is a way for us to bring dynamism to our presence through our voice.

There are 2 aspects of pace: rate of delivery of words (controlled by articulating each syllable clearly) and rate of delivery of ideas (controlled through pause).

### DO:

Demonstrate a too fast rate of delivery of words (talk really fast without articulating and blurring the words together).

Demonstrate a too fast rate of delivery of ideas (articulate well but do not pause between sentences for as long as you can keep it up).

### SAY (TIP FOR VIRTUAL SETTING);

In the virtual world, communication demands even closer attention to pace!

Especially if you are not on video (which we sometimes aren't, aka the telephone) or if your ability to use body language is limited (like when you are framed from the chest up).

## Expression

### SAY:

Expression is another key aspect of presence.

Expression means how you use your face, body, and voice to share your message and connect with your audience.

Our expression, both physical and verbal, tells our audience how to feel about what we are saying.

Expression is always important in communication, but it is absolutely critical in virtual communication, when our voice is the main lever of presence we are pulling, or even the ONLY lever of presence that we have (i.e., when we are on the phone or off camera).

## BREAK

15 MIN

Take a 15-minute break



### IN THIS SECTION

The presenter will present their script (for approx. 2 minutes) and is recorded.

The audience observes the presenter and provides positive feedback. They should make a note of what they think the presenter is doing well.

### NOTES:

## INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS

60 MIN

### SAY:

Today everyone will present, be recorded, and get coaching, on their Leader's Script.

### DO:

Ask if participants need quiet time to finalize their Script before presenting - if they need it, allocate time for this.

Ask each participant to present their Leader's Script (for 2 minutes) and is videotaped.

Solicit positive feedback from the other participants.

Provide 1 point of constructive feedback from you (facilitator).

Identify an area they can improve (coaching point).

Ask the participant to try out something new re: the coaching point and get them to test it out before you tape again.

The participant presents for a second time.

After the presentations finish, debrief: Ask participants to answer - based on your presentation today, what area of your presence and voice do you want to work on?

## CLOSE

TOTAL DURATION:  
5 MIN



### IN THIS SECTION

Restating the key message reinforces the main takeaway of this session and ensures it is top of mind for participants.

Encouraging participants to watch recordings of themselves and reflect on their presence helps them continue to develop their skills beyond the session.

## RESTATED MESSAGE + CALL TO ACTION

15 MIN

### SAY:

**Give Re-Stated Message:** By harnessing the power of your presence and voice, you will embody your leadership identity in every communication opportunity.

Invite participants to watch future recordings of themselves that they can do before a presentation, for example. Let them know that this can be an uncomfortable experience, but the point is to be an objective observer of their own presence. As they watch their recordings: ask them to mark down, one thing they are doing well that showcases their leadership identity and one area to work on.

## SESSION 4

# Inspiring Conversations

## Session Overview

OVERVIEW	TOPIC	SESSION OVERVIEW	DURATION
INTRODUCTION (10 MIN)	Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate a discussion on inspiring conversations; or</li> <li>Share an anecdote about a past conversation at work that illustrates a larger communication you learned.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
ACTIVE LISTENING (95 MIN)	Play the Video: Inspiring Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play the video: Inspiring Conversations.</li> </ul>	20 MIN
	Debrief Video: Inspiring Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debrief the video.</li> <li>Ask participants how consciously they intentionally showcase understanding, positive emotion management, and empathy during their conversations at work.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Active Listening Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice active listening.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Debrief: Active Listening Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debrief the exercise.</li> </ul>	5 MIN
	Disengaged Listening Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice disengaged listening.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Debrief: Disengaged Listening Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debrief the exercise.</li> </ul>	5 MIN
	3 Levels of Active Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline the 3 levels of active listening: Physical listening, mental listening, emotional listening.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants take a 15-minute break.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
DESP METHODOLOGY (65 MIN)	Introduce DESP Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the DESP model.</li> <li>Walk through an example for participants.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
	Solo Work: Draft Challenging Conversation Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have learners draft challenging conversation examples.</li> </ul>	15 MIN
	Exercise: Practicing DESP Methodology During Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants practice the DESP methodology.</li> </ul>	30 MIN
	Debrief: Practicing DESP Methodology During Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debrief on DESP techniques and what was effective or challenging.</li> </ul>	10 MIN
CLOSE (10 MIN)	Reflections on Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have participants reflect on their experience with the program.</li> </ul>	5 MIN
	Restated Message + Call to Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a restated message on session.</li> <li>Provide a call to action for the Taking the Stage® program.</li> </ul>	5 MIN

TOTAL TIME: 180 MIN

## INTRODUCTION

TOTAL DURATION:  
10 MIN

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants can use the Leader's Script to plan their side of the conversation.

Participants can use the DESP technique to listen actively and defuse conflict.

## NOTES:



Emphasize the importance of embracing conversations as leadership opportunities.

## NOTES:

## WELCOME

10 MIN

## DO:

Welcome everyone.

## BRIDGE

## Option A:

Facilitate a discussion based on the question: "What makes an inspiring conversation?"

## Option B:

Share an anecdote about a past conversation at work that illustrates a larger communication lesson you learned. Either:

i) One that didn't go as planned (this could be a moment that you bungled, a sharp remark you wish you had responded to differently, or simply a leadership opportunity that you let pass because you didn't collect your thinking in the moment).

OR

ii.) Or one that was inspiring and positively shaped your professional trajectory.

## SAY [SUBJECT]

This session is about inspiring conversations.

## SAY [MESSAGE]

By embracing conversations as leadership opportunities, you will foster deeper connections, inspire confidence, and showcase your communication skills.

## SAY [STRUCTURAL STATEMENT]

For today's agenda, we'll start with a video introducing the material and concepts for this session.

Next, we'll define and practice with group exercises the act of active listening.

Following that, we'll practice active listening during challenging conversations through a structured methodology.

Lastly, we'll wrap up with a rapid-fire practice exercise and then go over program takeaways, so when you leave this session, these skills will be part of your everyday leadership toolkit.



## ACTIVE LISTENING

TOTAL DURATION:  
95 MINPLAY THE VIDEO: INSPIRING  
CONVERSATIONS

20 MIN

## BEFORE STARTING THE VIDEO

Before starting the video, activate participant engagement by asking them to “identify one thing in the video that resonates with them.”

Ask them to be ready to share their thoughts during the discussion to follow.



Play the video:

<https://vimeo.com/1089139197>

## PLAY THE VIDEO: INSPIRING CONVERSATIONS

DEBRIEF VIDEO: INSPIRING  
CONVERSATIONS

15 MIN

NOTES:

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Ask participants to speak to the one thing they identified in the video that resonated with them.

Incorporate the following question as part of the debrief:

- How do you intentionally showcase understanding, positive emotion management, and empathy during your conversations at work?

## ACTIVE LISTENING EXERCISE

15 MIN

## SAY:

Your everyday interactions, whether they're brief chats with coworkers or formal presentations, rely on your conversational skills.

Like other communication skills, developing your conversation skills will bolster your effectiveness as a leader.

But what does it take to become a better conversationalist, and how can you develop this as a skill?

Let's first define this word: conversation.

According to Merriam-Webster, a conversation is: “An oral exchange of sentiments, observations, opinions or ideas.”

But inspiring conversations require more than a transactional exchange.

So how do you move away from having transactional conversations to ones that build relationships, trust and engagement at work?

The key: practice active listening.

## NOTES:

## SAY:

We are now going to do an exercise that immerses us in both experiencing and demonstrating active listening behaviours.

You will be divided into pairs for approximately 10 min. Each pair will go through at least two rounds of the activity.

### Round 1

One person will take on the role of the “speaker,” and the other will be the “active listener.”

“Speaker,” you have 3 minutes to talk about something that interests you - whether it’s a weekend activity, a current project, or future vacation plans. Speak for 3 minutes straight.

“Active listener,” your responsibility is to illustrate, for those 3 minutes, what you consider to be crucial behaviours associated with active listening.

### Round 2

Alternate your roles, so that the “speaker” from Round 1 becomes the “active listener” and vice versa.

After each round, briefly discuss with each other what strategies were used to illustrate “active listening.”

After both rounds, be ready to debrief the exercise with the larger group. Everyone ready? Let’s begin!...

## DEBRIEF: ACTIVE LISTENING EXERCISE

5 MIN

## SAY:

Let’s debrief. I will ask each pair to share what their partner did effectively to practice active listening...

## DISENGAGED LISTENING EXERCISE

10 MIN

## SAY:

We are going to do another activity. This time I am going to ask you to demonstrate and experience disengaged listening.

You will be divided into pairs for approximately 10 min. Each pair will go through at least two rounds of the activity.

In **Round 1**, one person will take on the role of the “speaker,” and the other will be the “disengaged listener.”

The “Speaker” will have 3 minutes to talk about a memorable experience from their professional life. Speak for 3 minutes straight.

## NOTES:




## IN THIS SECTION

Explaining the 3 levels of active listening (physical, mental, emotional) provides a framework for participants to understand and practice effective listening behaviours.

## NOTES:



The "Disengaged listener" will demonstrate disengaged/distracted listening during the speaker's talk.

In **Round 2**, switch roles so that the previous "disengaged listener" becomes the "speaker" and vice versa. Repeat the process.

After each round, briefly discuss with each other how "disengaged listening" was demonstrated.

After both rounds, be ready to debrief the exercise with the larger group. Everyone ready? Let's begin!...

## DEBRIEF: DISENGAGED LISTENING EXERCISE

5 MIN

### SAY:

Let's debrief. I will go around the room and ask each pair to share what their partner did that demonstrated disengaged listening and how it affected the speaker...

## 3 LEVELS OF ACTIVE LISTENING

10 MIN

### ASK:

Given your experience in these two exercises, who would like to volunteer to define active listening?

### SAY:

Listening goes beyond simply hearing; it involves active engagement. Active listeners use additional senses in this process. This is why active listening has 3 levels: physical, mental, and emotional.

### LET'S REVIEW THESE COMPONENTS:

#### 1. Physical listening means:

Demonstrating that you are listening through body language. Behaviours to practice include: nodding; trying to be still (if you can't, channel that energy into action that isn't disruptive to others i.e. avoid noisy pen clicking); and facing the person you're listening to.

#### 2. Mental listening means:

Demonstrating that you understand someone else's way of thinking. So this means suspending your judgment and your own thought process. Behaviours include: paraphrasing what the speaker is saying; asking clarifying questions; mirroring language that the speaker uses (even if it's not how you would say it); taking notes or doodling if it's helpful to you (make sure to mention why you are doing this to the other person so they don't feel ignored).

#### 3. Emotional listening means:

Demonstrating that you acknowledge the emotions that are either explicit or implicit. "Listen" to cues like tone, word choice, and body

NOTES:

language to gauge how the person you’re talking to is feeling. Use expressions of empathy (“I can see X. Tell me how you’re feeling.”). Ask gentle questions (“How does what I’m saying sit with you?”) to probe further.

Now that we know what active listening is and isn’t, we are going to explore how to prepare for conversations that are challenging. We are going to practice this, in a few moments, through a structured communication methodology.

BREAK15 MIN

Take a 15-minute break.

DESP METHODOLOGYTOTAL DURATION: 40 MIN



IN THIS SECTION

Explaining how conversations can become moments of uncertainty helps participants understand the importance of managing challenging conversations effectively.

NOTES:

INTRODUCE DESP METHODOLOGY10 MIN

**SAY:**

So far, we have touched on how conversations are an interplay between each person’s choice to speak or listen. Conversations enable communication. And listening builds relationships. But conversations can also become moments of uncertainty that can spiral into tension, non-constructive disagreement, confusion, and debate instead of dialogue.

Occasionally, in a conversation, your conversation partner might pose a question that catches you off guard. Answering unexpected questions can be a daunting process. It requires quick, yet organized thinking. It requires a sense of audience, as well as a sense of the larger message you want to deliver. It is an exercise in leadership.

**ASK:**

I want to hear from a couple of volunteers: What shifts conversations involving opposing viewpoints or challenging subject matters, from moments of potential tension into opportunities for connection and rapport-building?

**SAY:**

I’m now going to outline a methodology that will help you transform challenging conversations into moments for you to display your leadership where you show that you are paying attention, withhold judgment, reflect, clarify, and create a constructive path forward.

It is a 4-sentence technique, with the acronym DESP.

- D = stands for disarm**
- E = stands for empathize**
- S = stands for support**
- P = stands for probe or persuade**

Let’s dig into each step some more.

## NOTES:



If the group needs assistance, use the example answer provided.

## D

The first step is to disarm a situation when you notice conflict arising because it enables you to find common ground. Start this step with e.g. “It’s true that...” “I agree that...” “You’re right...”

In this first step, instead of immediately disagreeing with someone else’s perspective, look for something to agree with—even if it’s just a small part of their view. By agreeing with and repeating back to your conversational partner what was said – in their own words, in the way they understood it – you avoid making assumptions. This also helps you to understand the exact question being asked.

## E

The second step is about empathizing by acknowledging feelings. Start this step with e.g. “I see that this is a difficult situation” or “How are you feeling about this?”

## S

The third step is about articulating your support by providing help or praise. e.g. “We’ve always been able to work through problems together...” “You’re always honest in situations like these...”

## P

Here you probe by asking “what” and “how” questions like: “What else are you feeling?” “How can we move forward?” And/or you persuade by going back to your message, e.g. “And that’s why I believe...” “I’m confident that we can....”

## SAY:

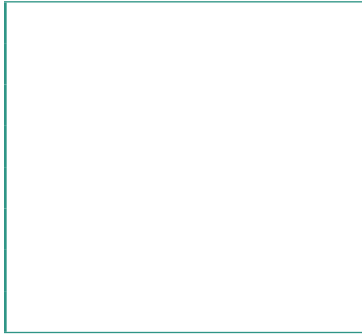
I am going to give an example, and I want us as a group to walk through applying DESP. Let’s say this is the speaker’s message:

- “I believe that by increasing our marketing budget by 20% this quarter we will see massive returns.”
- The person on the other end of the conversation says the following: “Where do you think we are going to get that budget from? We haven’t allocated for that.”

## What would a response using DESP sound like?

- **Disarm:** “It’s true that we haven’t allocated money for this.”
- **Empathize:** “I understand that moving away from the budget we all agreed to is not only frustrating but will also create uncertainty within the organization.”
- **Support:** “I want to provide support for you by giving you opportunities to discuss how we can lay this out.”
- **Probe:** “How do you think we can move forward on this together?” Or “What do you need to feel confident about this 20% increase?”
- **Persuade:** “I am confident that we can make this work.”

## NOTES:




## IN THIS SECTION

If participants need help thinking about an upcoming challenging conversation, refer them back to their Leader's Script example and have them imagine possible conversations that would stem from their having delivered their script.



Switching roles ensures that participants experience different perspectives, enhancing their understanding of the method.

## SOLO WORK: DRAFT CHALLENGING CONVERSATION EXAMPLES

15 MIN

### SAY:

I am going to give you quiet time to think of 3 upcoming challenging conversations. For each example, draft what message you want to deliver and jot down what action you want to drive.

After the time is up, we will do a roleplaying exercise.

Everyone ready? Any questions? You can begin your solo work now.

## EXERCISE: PRACTICING DESP METHODOLOGY DURING CONVERSATIONS

30 MIN

### SAY:

We are going to roleplay the DESP technique.

You will be placed into groups of 3. Each person will assign themselves one of the following roles: "**Speaker**," "**Responder**" or "**Observer**." You will switch roles for each round.

During a round:

- The "**Speaker**:" Provide a brief context about the challenging conversation, and then recite your message.
- The "**Responder**:" Respond to the message with an impromptu push-back question.
- The "**Speaker**:" Practice the DESP technique. (D = disarm / E = empathize / S = support / P = probe and/or persuade.)
- The "**Observer**:" Give feedback on i.) the "Speaker's" adherence to the DESP structure ii.) how both the "Speaker" and "Responder" demonstrated active listening.

Everyone ready? Let's begin!...

## DEBRIEF: PRACTICING DESP METHODOLOGY DURING CONVERSATIONS

10 MIN

### DO:

Ask for volunteers to reflect on what they found effective or challenging in the DESP exercise.

### ASK:

- What did you find effective or challenging applying the DESP technique during the roleplay?

- What is your biggest takeaway from this session on active listening and the DESP technique?
- Give me examples of upcoming communication opportunities where you can apply the skills learned in this session.

## CLOSE

TOTAL DURATION:  
10 MIN



### IN THIS SECTION

Encourage participants to think about what they plan to do differently moving forward to promote ongoing development and confidence in applying the skills learned during the program.

### NOTES:

## REFLECTIONS ON PROGRAM

5 MIN

### DO:

Ask for volunteers to reflect on their experience throughout the program.

### SAY:

- What have you learned that has been the most helpful throughout this program.
- What are your biggest takeaways from this program?
- What do you plan to do differently moving forward?

## RESTATED MESSAGE + CALL TO ACTION

5 MIN

### SAY [RESTATED MESSAGE]

Your work today has demonstrated the power of embracing conversations as leadership opportunities.

### SAY [CALL TO ACTION FOR THE TAKING THE STAGE® PROGRAM]

Your call to action is clear - be consistent and intentional in practicing and refining the skills and techniques you learned in *Taking the Stage*®. By embracing this commitment, every day, it will not only make your own leadership identity visible in every communication, but it will inspire and positively transform everyone around you.