

Guidance for Speakers

Thank you for applying or considering sharing your knowledge, skills or experience at one of our groups.

We welcome speakers from a range of professions, backgrounds and experiences at our Talk and Support groups as they are a great way to share knowledge, your lived experience, spark discussions, and encourage support in a relaxed and friendly setting.

Our Talk and Support groups are facilitated by a team of dedicated volunteers and comprise a mixture of face to face groups in local communities, as well as online via Zoom. These volunteers are supported by our Peer Support Team.

Whether you're an experienced speaker or new to presenting, this guide will help you deliver an engaging and effective session that aligns with Epilepsy Actions mission and values and ensures that no personal advice or is provided that may result in your personally, or the charity being liable.

By taking part as a guest speaker, you acknowledge that your role is voluntary and that your contribution is for **general information and discussion purposes only**. You agree not to provide, or appear to provide, personal, medical, legal, financial, therapeutic, or professional advice to any participant. Epilepsy Action is not responsible for the views, opinions, or content expressed by guest speakers, and all speakers are expected to maintain appropriate boundaries and safeguard the wellbeing of participants.

Before you deliver your session one of the Peer Support Officers will arrange to meet with you to discuss any support or help you may need in order to deliver your session.

TOP TIPS

Planning Your Session

- **Know Your Audience**

Think about who will be attending and what they might already know about your topic. Consider whether you are talking about a particularly emotive topic and whether you need to include a trigger warning.

- **Define Your Key Message**

What's the main takeaway? Keep it focused on the topic you have been asked to present about.

Structure Your Session

A good format is:

1. **Introduction** – Who you are and why this topic matters.
2. **Main Content** – Present your key points with examples.
3. **Engagement** – Encourage discussion, questions, or an activity.
4. **Conclusion** – Summarise the key takeaways and next steps.

Keeping Everyone Safe and Protected

To ensure that your session remains safe, appropriate, and within the charity's safeguarding and liability boundaries, please:

- Keep your content general and informative rather than advisory.
- Avoid making definitive statements that could be interpreted as medical or professional guidance.
- Use clear boundaries when sharing personal experiences (e.g., "This is what worked for me, but everyone is different.").
- Refrain from discussing sensitive topics beyond your comfort or expertise.
- Avoid collecting personal data or asking participants to disclose private information.
- If someone shares something concerning or potentially related to harm, please inform the group facilitator privately at the earliest appropriate moment.
- Respect participant confidentiality and privacy at all times.

You are **not** expected or permitted to:

- Provide personalised advice or recommendations (medical, legal, financial, therapeutic, or otherwise).
- Diagnose, suggest treatments, or comment on an individual's health or circumstances.
- Share confidential information about yourself or others.
- Promote commercial products or services.

If a participant asks for specific or personal advice, please gently redirect them and encourage them to speak with a qualified professional or contact Epilepsy Action's Helpline or resources.

A Peer Support Officer will happily assist with wording or boundaries if you are unsure.

Consider your presentation style

Are you happy to talk or do you want to share slides, videos or other resources in the session. Our team can support you with this, just let us know your thoughts in advance.

Delivering Your Session

- **Be Clear and Friendly**
Speak naturally and at a steady pace. If using slides, keep them simple and visual rather than text-heavy.
- **Make It Interactive**
Encourage participation through questions, real-life examples, or short discussions.
- **Be Inclusive**
Use accessible language, explain unfamiliar terms, and ensure your materials are easy to read and understand.
- **Prepare for Questions**
Be open to questions and discussions. If you don't know the answer to something, it's fine to say you'll find out and follow up later.

Final Tips

- Keep it relaxed—the sessions should be informal and enjoyable.
- Focus on engagement rather than perfection—sharing knowledge is what matters most.
- Most importantly, have fun and enjoy the experience!

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Planning Notes

Guest Speaker Checklist

Use this checklist as you prepare your session:

Before the Session

- Meet with the Peer Support Officer to discuss your topic and any support needed.
- Confirm your session content aligns with Epilepsy Action's mission and safeguarding policies.
- Prepare general information only – no personalised advice.
- Plan any slides or handouts and check accessibility (large font, clear language).
- Test any technology needed (for Zoom sessions).

During the Session

- Introduce yourself clearly, including your role as a volunteer speaker.
- State that your content is general and not personal advice.
- Encourage inclusive, respectful conversation.
- Redirect any advice-seeking questions appropriately.
- Maintain safeguarding boundaries and avoid collecting personal information.

After the Session

- Share any agreed resources with the facilitator to distribute.
- Provide feedback or raise any concerns with the Peer Support Officer.