



## Training

### Manchester Parent Champions

#### When it comes to Public Speaking – you either love it or hate it...

Public Speaking is often a topic that can raise a fear in people – I can't just stand up in front of a load of people and speak - what if I say the wrong thing, what if I don't get my message across, how do I keep the attention of the audience? All of these thoughts plus undoubtedly 1000s more questions are running through your mind and this is even before you stand up to talk.

In October, we decided to run a Public Speaking workshop working with Stephen Dows from Stand and be Counted whom we actually got to know through a wedding (but that's a completely different story). Stephen has a vast and varied knowledge and experience in Public Speaking – being a compare himself he quotes on his LinkedIn page that he and microphones have a good relationship.

Manchester Parent Champions were amongst the attendees to the workshop. The champions are a dynamic group of parent/carers with a child or younger person with special educational needs or disability. The group have over 155 members working on many exciting projects all over the city to help improve services for young people with disabilities. This workshop offered the group an opportunity to build on existing skills, learn new techniques, build on confidence and gain an understanding in how to prepare themselves to be better speakers.

Members reported that they often find themselves in situations such as meetings, appointments, events where the subject can be very personal and emotions are heightened. This can lead to a struggle in getting your point across whilst remaining cool and calm. The workshop allowed them to understand how to prepare better for these situations, what techniques / styles can be used and most importantly to not be afraid. There is a danger that you think you know everything about public speaking if you regularly are faced with having to speak but actually, there is a lot still to be learnt. The group definitely recommend anyone whether you are new to public speaking or have been speaking for years to attend this course.

The group offered some useful feedback on their experience of the training:

*"I have a child with a disability and English is my second language, but I want to help others in my community, but I am not always confident about how I come across. This course gave me tips and advice and confidence on how to communicate better"*



*"I was a teacher in my own country but there was a war and when I came to the UK I lost my confidence to tell my story to others. This course has help me get back the skills I had but I think it has also given me better skills now"*

*"I talk very fast and people tell me they miss half of what I say when I am doing a talk. This course helped me to learn to breath better when I talk, stay calm and get my message across in a better way"*

*"I learned you can keep your own style when you do public speaking (like using humour) but just make sure it is appropriate"*

*"I get upset some time when I am talking about my child's needs to others (like GP, social workers) so I learned that it's important to leave the audience with information/handouts if you feel you might not have been able to get your whole message across"*

If you would like to know more about Parent Champions, you can find them on Facebook 'Manchester Parent Champions' and click to join or email:  
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