



Speak volumes

FHT expert adviser, Sally Kay, FFHT, offers tips to reflexologists on giving talks to organisations and community groups

I often see comments on social media from reflexology practitioners who have been invited to be a guest speaker and are asking for advice. Since 2005, when I first qualified, I have spoken to a wide range of organisations and community groups about reflexology. Through this experience I have developed a very simple formula, which is easy to use for any audience:

- be prepared;
- keep it simple and authentic;
- make it interactive and fun; and
- know your audience.

Be prepared

Visual aids are great for talks, and can be prepared beforehand. I use big blank feet, drawn free hand on a large sheet of flip chart

paper. These are carefully drawn, in plenty of time at home, with no pressure. Depending on the venue, this can be stuck to the wall or displayed on a flipchart stand. Take a pack of coloured felt-tip marker pens with you to bring the feet to life. These outline drawings do not need to be perfect, and can be used to your advantage, as an icebreaker.

Keep it simple and authentic

Introduce yourself and keep it simple and authentic by speaking from your professional experience. This leads to less pressure and it is easier to answer questions. If you aren't confident talking about specialist types of reflexology, keeping it simple is the answer.

Give a brief summary of the history of reflexology, enough to introduce the

modern day foot map. For example: 'There is evidence dating back thousands of years of its use among ancient civilizations including Egypt, China, India and Rome. Reflexology, as we understand it today, uses a foot map. It is believed that different points of the feet (and hands) correspond with different areas of the body.'

Give basic information and avoid claims about treating medical conditions, or knowing how reflexology works. If you're asked this, it's fair to say: 'We don't know how it works, but there are different theories', and then move on.

Make it interactive and fun

Turning to the blank feet (already prepared and up on the wall or flip chart), I use my icebreaker: 'I'm not here for my artistic skills!'. This lightens the atmosphere and helps everyone to relax – including me – into a fun and interactive presentation. I explain the foot map and show the audience how to work some of the reflexes on their hands and feet, which correspond to aches and pains people may have.

With different coloured marker pens, I gradually bring the feet to life by drawing the reflexes on, using an anatomical reflection theory. For example, head at the top of the body, above the shoulders, which are on the outer edges, spine down the middle, neck, upper-back, mid back, lower back, heart slightly to the left, lungs in the chest area one on each foot. Use the waistline, shoulder line, spine and pelvis as anatomical reference points, in relation to other areas and how to locate corresponding reflexes.

Take plenty of time and don't worry about your artistic skills. You can invite questions as you do this, such as: 'Is there anyone here with shoulder problems?'. Put the pen down, go to that person and show them the shoulder reflex on the hand or foot, depending on footwear or mobility.

It's good to be relaxed and aware of the audience. Even if you haven't finished drawing reflexes, wander round, invite and answer questions, interact and show people where to find their aches and pains.





Organising talks

You can contact local groups and offer to be a guest speaker, or you may be contacted and invited by them. Examples of different organisations you could speak at include the WI, school PTAs, NCT and various health support groups, careers support groups and local business networking organisations.

Giving talks in your local area introduces you and your business to the community. Informal conversations afterwards often include comments such as: 'I've always wanted to try reflexology and didn't know where to go'.

Local talks are free advertising and organisations will be grateful for your time, in particular local charities or community support groups. It's also a fun thing to do, and can even help to boost your confidence. In return you will have an opportunity to hand out business cards, or discount vouchers to attendees.

Additionally, charities and other organisations usually have a raffle. A voucher for a reflexology session makes a great raffle prize. If the group holds regular meetings and has a raffle each time, you could even offer one per meeting for a whole year, it's entirely up to you. A year's worth of raffle prizes is a great way of advertising your services.

When it comes to digestion and elimination (large intestine), give a brief description of the anatomy. Keep it simple like: 'It starts on the right side of the body, goes up, across, along the waistline, down and out, in a clockwise direction'.

Explain how and why a reflexologist might work these reflexes in a clockwise direction to support the process of elimination. If appropriate, hold your hands up and demonstrate, using a flat-fisted rotation in a clockwise direction on the palm of each hand as a self-help suggestion for anyone who suffers digestive imbalances, such as constipation.

An interactive presentation is more fun and interesting for everyone, speaker included. Approximately 10 to 20 minutes of talk time is enough, with additional time spent answering questions and encouraging further audience participation. Generally a speaker will be invited to talk for 30 to 60 minutes, and a short talk with plenty of interaction is a perfect way to fill the time. Remember to make eye contact around the room and not just engage with those closest, even if it's a big group. I recently turned up to speak to the local WI, expecting approximately 15 people, and there were 65. This simple formula works for a group of any size.

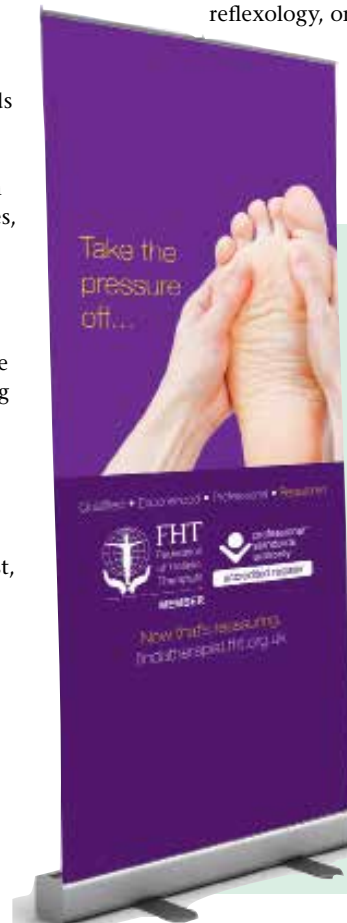
Know your audience

It is important to know your audience when it comes to choice of language and terminology. There is no need for anatomical terms, unless speaking to other

healthcare professionals such as medics, nurses or midwives.

Include any appropriate areas of special interest, with relevance to the group. For example, if speaking to the National Childbirth Trust (NCT), mention maternity reflexology, or reflexology

for babies and infants, if you have the relevant knowledge and skills.



Reflexology resources from FHT

Remember, if you are listed on the FHT's Accredited Register for reflexology, you can download free flyers and posters featuring this therapy from the Members Area of the FHT website. Pop-up banners and leaflets are also available to purchase from our shop, shop.fht.org.uk.



Sally Kay, FFHT, a winner of the FHT 2012 Excellence in Practice Awards, graduated with First Class Honours and a prize for the best dissertation in 2011 from Cardiff Metropolitan

University. Sally provides an FHT-accredited short course in Reflexology Lymph Drainage (RLD), with a number of dates at venues in the UK and Ireland. www.reflexologylymphdrainage.co.uk