



PUBLIC SPEAKING PROGRAM

Public speaking is definitely something that not everyone can do with the utmost confidence. Public speaking can be extremely nerve racking and it takes both skills and confidence to do this. Unfortunately, not everyone is aware of the key points to build more confidence in their presentation. Luckily, Dr. LeQuita Hoggood Porter offered to help people build up their confidence by establishing the “Public Speaking” program for the East Preston Empowerment Academy. This class has been a staple of EPEA and was originally offered in person to members of the East Preston community. “It’s a confidence building class. So, the intention is to get people who are really frightened by public speaking, which happens to be a large percentage of people, and to do some extra work of just building up confidence, and putting in the time for practice and preparation, so that they can feel more confident in what they have been doing,” Dr. Porter said. The most recent sessions took place between March until April and was a total of six sessions. On this new fully online format, while it wasn’t the same experience Dr. Porter was used to, she was able to communicate with more people throughout Nova Scotia. Being able to work online actually benefited some people because it helped participants adjust the environment in their homes to become more comfortable while doing different presentation exercises. This led to some rather fun results.

“I even told them that they could have candles all around them, especially with Zoom they could have all kinds of things going on and no one could see it. If it caused them to relax, but we had a lot of fun with it, and at the very end of it we have what I call ‘EPEA Talks’, and it’s modeled off of the TED talks, which is some of what we look at when we look at videos, we look at other examples of speakers who have different styles.”

This all leads to inevitable final exam that all the participants take at the end of the six-week program. The point of the final exam is to use all of the knowledge and communication skills they have learned in order to make their own presentation to the rest of the class. Even after the classes are over, Dr. Porter always preaches about the importance of practice and how it truly does help us hone our public speaking skills and to boost our confidence when we present to a group. Needless to say that this program is another important way for EPEA to give back to the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Colour) community in East Preston and other parts of Nova Scotia.