



# Best Buddies Ambassadors

## Speech Coach Information Sheet

Being a speech coach for an Ambassador Training is a rewarding opportunity to support advocates and provide leadership opportunities to people with disabilities. The Best Buddies Ambassador's recognizes the commitment you are making by participating as a speech coach and we are grateful for the time and energy you share to make this training a huge success. Below is information to keep in mind as a speech coach in an Ambassador Training.

### ***What is a speech coach?***

Speech coaches have the important task of supporting ambassadors on their journey of discovery and self-advocacy. As a speech coach, you serve in the role as sounding board, friend, confidant, and supporter. Each speech coach is paired with one or two ambassador for the duration of the training and will help ambassadors through the education session and in developing their own speech.

As with any form of writing, having someone to brainstorm with and a second set of eyes to help with editing leads to a higher quality speech and enhanced skills in the art of public speaking. Speech coaches serve in this capacity throughout the training; they will help with developing topics, framing outlines, writing speeches, practicing the presentation, and preparing for the performance.

### ***What are the responsibilities of a speech coach?***

Speech coaches can assist with transcribing notes, brainstorming, focusing, editing, content organization, and a variety of other ways depending on the ambassador's needs. Speech coaches should not write or create content for the speeches; on the contrary, it is important that speeches serve as the voice of the ambassador with little influence from the speech coach. Speech coaches should be a sounding board and making sure the ambassador's voice is heard. Most importantly, have fun. This is suppose to be a wonderful experience for both of you.

### ***Tips for a Speech Coach***

1. Remember, this is your ambassador's speech first and foremost. You are encouraged to help out when needed, but make sure the voices of the ambassadors are coming through in the speeches.
2. Be patient. At times, there may be long periods of silence. The ambassador you are working with may be thinking or pondering what to say next. Allow time to think and respond before pushing forward.
3. Make sure your ambassador is able to read and understand their speech. Practice reading aloud and suggest alternatives to words that do not sound natural to the speaker.
4. Help keep ambassadors on track. Everyone is excited to be at the training and meet new friends, but keep the focus of your time together speech writing and self-advocacy.
5. Everyone will work at their own pace and this is encouraged; however, work with your ambassador to meet the timeframe of the class. If your ambassador needs more time, focus on having content to work with first and foremost; you can always go back and edit later when time allow.
6. We all learn and grasp things differently; if you feel the ambassador you are working with does not understand a concept, review the instructions again.
7. The agenda is designed to start with a variety of brainstorming activities that may be helpful during the writing process. As the ambassadors share their stories, write down notes and compelling quotes that may contribute to a great speech.
8. It is okay to give constructive criticism. All professional speakers have editors. Ambassadors have the final say in how their speeches will sound, but speak up if you feel there is a way to help the speech become better. Ambassadors are learning from you as much as the facilitator.
9. Be respectful. This may be the first time ambassadors are sharing their stories and they may have personal anecdotes. All ideas are worthy of consideration and all ambassadors have potential.
10. Remember to add humor if appropriate to the ambassador's speech. Although this training does require work it should be fun and enjoyable to all that are involved.
11. If you have any questions, the class facilitator is always available to help and address concerns.



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### Resources

#### People First Language

Best Buddies promotes social inclusion and respect for all people. The easiest way to show respect is in how we speak about people. People first language is an approach that many organizations and people in the Disability Rights movement use when speaking about our peers with disabilities.

People first language recognizes that individuals with disabilities are—first and foremost—people. It emphasizes each person’s value, individuality, dignity, and capabilities.

When choosing words to use about people with disabilities, refer to the person first, not the disability. A person with an intellectual or developmental disability should not be described as a “disabled person.” Best Buddies and its members use “a person with an intellectual or developmental disability” instead. By doing this, we place the emphasis on the person, not the disability.

By using people first language, we are helping to eliminate the negative stereotypes and limitations that others often ascribe to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The following examples provide guidance on what terms to use and which ones to avoid when talking or writing about people with disabilities.

#### Examples of People First Language

##### **Say:**

People with disabilities.  
 He has an intellectual disability.  
 She has autism (or an autism diagnosis).  
 He has a diagnosis of Down syndrome.  
 She has a learning disability (diagnosis).  
 He has a physical disability (diagnosis).  
 He has a mental health diagnosis.  
 She uses a wheelchair/mobility chair.  
 He receives special ed services.  
 She has a developmental delay.  
 Kids without disabilities.  
 Communicates with her eyes/device/etc.  
 Congenital disability  
 Brain injury  
 Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.  
 She needs . . . or she uses . . .

##### **Instead of:**

The handicapped or disabled.  
 He’s mentally retarded.  
 She’s autistic.  
 He’s Down’s.  
 She’s learning disabled.  
 He’s a quadriplegic/crippled.  
 He’s emotionally disturbed/mentally ill.  
 She’s confined/wheelchair bound.  
 He’s in special ed.  
 She’s developmentally delayed.  
 Normal or healthy kids.  
 Is non-verbal.  
 Birth defect  
 Brain damaged  
 Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc.  
 She has problems/special needs.



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### Cont. Resources

#### Examples of One-Liners

It was one of the most exciting days of my life...

It was not exactly what I expected...

What would the world be like without...

If I were to ask you...

Who would have thought that...

It was just one of those days...

It never ceases to amaze me...

Would it interest/amaze/surprise/shock you to know...

#### Transition Words

##### **Above all**

At the same time

At this point

Be that as it may

By, and, or

##### **Finally**

In conclusion

In fact

In my opinion

In other words, as it were

##### **Meanwhile**

Similarly

Still

Strangely enough

Then

#### Useful links, phrases and conjunctions

How could you/we possibly...? Do you really think...? What would happen if...? Could you imagine..? Do you want to be part of...? Are we to believe that...? Doesn't everyone know that...?

In my opinion... For this reason... I feel that... I am sure that... Some believe that... Surely you would agree that... No one can deny... Most people would agree that... Here are two reasons why... This clearly shows that... We can see from the evidence that... It is certain... A sensible/good idea would be to... The truth is that... The fact is that

... And... Or... But... So... If... Because... However... Yet... Firstly... Secondly... Next... In addition... Finally... In conclusion... For... Above all... Although... Though... Whether... Until... Even though... Nevertheless... Otherwise... Provided that