

Dear 20X20 presenters,

We are getting very excited as ResilienceCon approaches!

We know many of you might be preparing a 20X20 for the first time and wanted to offer some tips and this amazing little animated timer you can put on your slide (HUGE help!).

The 20x20 format is intended to be an engaging way to succinctly present ideas. Despite its brevity, preparing a good 20x20 requires more thought, planning, and practice than traditional research presentations that are 2 or 3 times longer (We are reminded of a favorite quote about good writing: “I didn’t have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead”).

The formal structure of the talk -- exactly 20 slides presented for exactly 20 seconds each -- presents a challenge that forces us to think deeply about how to clearly convey our ideas to an audience. Like writing Haiku, operating under a set of constraints can inspire creativity and, perhaps paradoxically, free one up to do familiar things in new ways. We’ve found them to be fun to prepare and listen to, and great training for speaking to the media and policy makers. We offer some guidelines and attached examples to help you prepare.

1) Set the PowerPoint presentation to automatically advance each slide after 20 seconds. You do this on the Transitions tab, all the way on the right there is a section called Advance Slides and a place you can enter 20 seconds (be sure not to do 20 minutes or 20 milliseconds!)

The animated timer will show you how much of the 20 s you have left. It’s the little black box in the lower left corner of Sherry’s slides. Copy and paste it onto each slide. (be sure to copy from the PowerPoint file, not a pdf, so the animation will work in yours).

2) Because each slide will be shown for only 20 seconds, limiting the number of words or images on each slide will help listeners absorb the message you want to send. Things like tables full of data are more likely to detract than add to the presentation.

3) Images often work better than words because they can convey ideas in an engaging and visually simple form. If you present data (not required), think figures more than tables.

4) Keep your message focused; trying to cover too much will make it difficult for listeners to understand your take-home message and result in your racing through the presentation.

5) Practice, practice, practice. It’s difficult to speak “off the cuff” and fit your comments neatly within the 20 s limit for each slide. Long pauses while waiting for the slide to advance seem very long indeed in this format, and it is difficult to catch up if slides advance while you’re still talking about the prior one.

Looking forward to seeing your talks,

Sherry Hamby, Ph.D, Victoria Banyard, Ph.D., & Nicole Yuan, Ph.D., Conference Chairs