
Preparing to Verbally Answer Questions in Court



PRACTICE TIPS

- Review your report before the hearing. Know it.
- Assume that everyone will have read your report, but forgive them if they don't remember the contents. Therefore, you should be VERY familiar with the contents of your report without reciting it verbatim or reading from it.
- Know your judge. Know your court.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say you don't. Don't try to guess.
- Tell the truth.
- Don't feel a need to fill a void.
- Answer only the question asked.
- Know your case. Know your case file.
- Speak in your own words.
- Speak clearly.
- Appearance is important. Look professional.
- Don't talk about the case. Maintain confidentiality.
- Present information in a professional manner. Don't exaggerate.
- Don't lose your temper. The lawyers are doing their job. It is not personal.
- Listen to the question. Respond only to the question.
- Think before you speak.
- If question is asking for a yes or no answer, answer yes, no, or don't know. Don't speculate.
- Nobody expects you to know everything.
- If you realize that you made an error in prior testimony, don't be afraid to correct previous response.
- Don't volunteer information.
- Don't try to be a lawyer.
- Listen carefully and don't interrupt. If you are not given an opportunity to speak and you have something to say, find a place where you can request to "address the court."
- Stop talking if the judge asks you to do so.