



Your professional attire and presentation includes your verbal and non-verbal communication skills as well as your dress and personal hygiene. These factors play an important role in many professional settings including:

- Interviews
- Information sessions
- Job fairs
- Networking events & meetings
- Informational interviews

□ **Dress for the occasion**

In any professional situation, you want to ensure that you dress appropriately for your audience. It can be difficult to determine what to wear, but always remember that it is better to dress-up than dress down. Review the sample styles below. If you have questions about what attire to wear, reach out to your career consultant at the CPDC.

Business Professional



Business Casual



Smart Casual



□ **Practice effective verbal communication**

Even your most thoughtful answers to questions can lose their impact if they are not delivered in a professional manner. For example, most of us sprinkle our everyday speech with fillers, such as 'like' and 'you know,' that serve as transitions between thoughts and phrases.



While sometimes helpful, these fillers can be very distracting to the listener if they are overused. This is particularly true in a professional situation, as it focuses attention on the fillers instead of what is being said. In addition, many of us tend to talk rapidly or to mumble, especially in stressful situations such as job interviews. Both of these factors can make it difficult to understand your responses and will water down the strength of your presentation. Mock interviews are a great way to polish your verbal communications. Contact your career consultant for other strategies.

□ **Refine non-verbal communication skills**

Fillers and unclear speech aren't the only potential distracters in professional situations. During a job interview much of a recruiter's perception of you as a candidate is based on non-verbal factors that define your presence, or the impression that you convey. During any professional situation be aware of slouching, fidgeting, tapping your fingers, swiveling in the chair, or any other non-verbal distracters that can take away from your strong, professional presence. With a little practice, you can improve your non-verbal presence.

□ **Consider your personal hygiene**

Dress and personal hygiene are important aspects of your professional image. Choose your attire carefully and pay attention to small details. Despite the variety of styles, certain expectations remain universal:

- Clothes are clean, pressed, and free of odors
- Shower daily and use deodorant
- Hair should be washed and styled neatly
- Breath kept fresh
- Cologne or perfume kept to a minimum
- Jewelry and make-up should be professional and tasteful and kept to a minimum
- Earrings are acceptable, but other visible body piercings should be removed (except if interviewing in certain creative fields)
- Nails kept clean and neatly trimmed

Need additional help?

Be sure to check out our networking resources on our [website](#). Also, watch our elevator pitch [videos](#) to learn about your self-introduction.