
Top 10 Tips to Relieve Your Anxiety About Testifying

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Practical Strategies for Experts: Testifying Without Fear

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TOP 10



1. Pre-trial

- Know your referral source (and refuse referrals from sources you can't/don't have confidence in).
- Know your 'stuff' – stay within the limits of your expertise/knowledge and within the limitations of the data available when preparing your report (and while in trial).
- Prepare for trial – review the records and your report(s), and meet with counsel. Review the research literature if needed.
- Understand what the main issues of importance are at trial.

2. Respond to the Summons to Witness



3. Focus on your role as an expert

- You are there to help the courts come to an understanding of the case and in turn to find justice.
- You are NOT there to win! This isn't the World Series, or a competition...



4. Meet with the Lawyer



5. Slip into a 'comfort role'

- E.g. an educator, which most of us are comfortable with through our teaching of students and/or clients.
- Teach the jury/judge!



6. Keep the whole thing 'in context'

- Appearing at trial is important to many (!), but it's not as 'scary' as say a nuclear war or an asteroid striking earth would be.
- This is not about YOU!

7. Always Remain Objective



8. Dress Professionally and Conservatively



9. Stress reduction

- As a psychiatrist, I have to (and do) recommend whatever ‘works for you’ with respect to stress reduction – e.g. exercise ahead of your appearance, be well rested and refreshed, make plans to reduce other sources of stress in your life for the time of the trial, relaxation techniques, etc.
- If all of that doesn’t work, consider ‘Sex, drugs and rock and roll’ (kidding...?).

10. Avoid Becoming Evasive or Argumentative While Testifying