

# Talk is CHEAP!



We've all heard the saying, "talk is cheap". But what price your voice? What would you do if you couldn't speak?



## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS...

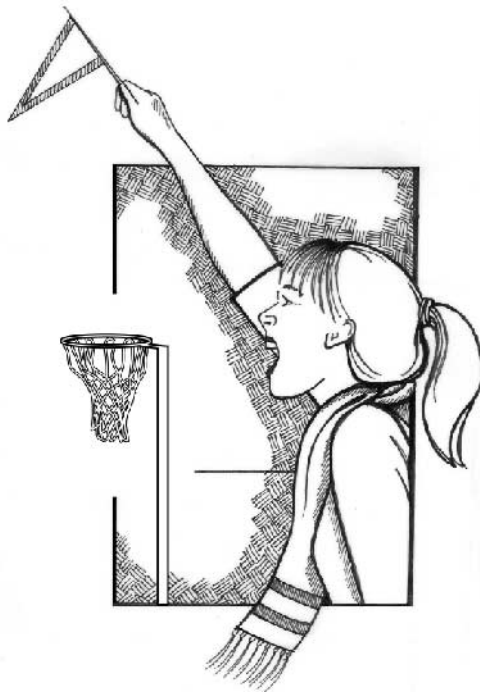
Can you imagine if you couldn't talk to your friends? Or sing along with your favourite song? Or cheer for your favourite team?

### PROJECT!

Don't you hate it when your teacher tells you to "project" your voice? What does that mean anyway? It doesn't mean to shout. When you shout, your message is often much less clear. When someone tells you to project, they want you to increase the quality of your vibrations - this is resonance and different from just volume. You can project by feeling more vibrations in the hard surfaces of your body - chest, head, neck, mouth, teeth.... The more vibrations without tension you have, the more you will be heard.

### RELAX!

When you really need to express a big thought, feeling or impulse, don't brace for it! Relax deeply and stay open through your whole torso so your breath can be the support for your sound, not tension and muscle. For drama students, warm your voice up. Professional actors do!



### BE NATURAL!

In the classroom, let your voice be as expressive as it is in the playground. Let it express who you really are! Don't be afraid to be heard!

### ACCESSORISE!

Instead of yelling yourself hoarse for your team - try accessorising! Use bells, whistles and clackers for effect. And borrow a megaphone to really make yourself heard.

VOCAL STRAIN CAN BE CAUSED BY:

stress

yelling and shouting

speaking in an unnaturally high or low pitch

speaking when you have a throat infection

clearing your throat

smoking

exposure to smoke, dust and allergens

poor breathing techniques, body posture, vocal fold/chord vibration and voice projection strategies.

# TIPS FOR TEACHERS...

**Did you know?** Voice problems are more common among teachers than in the general population.

## How would you teach if you lost your voice?

Teaching is a vocally demanding profession. You use your voice for long periods of time, often competing with loud students and other noises. You may also have to project your voice across the playground or sporting fields. A free and natural voice will last but inefficient use can cause problems.

## What can I do to help?

### HYDRATE!

If you are going to be talking for a long time, have water handy. A sip of cool water can really soothe the throat and vocal chords.

### RELAX!

A tense body creates strain and limits your vocal quality. You may tense your belly, armpits, jaw, tongue, knees ... even your breath. Any tension will create strain and take away from the natural function of the breath to support your voice.



### STOP!

You don't always have to compete with a rowdy mob. I had a teacher who just stopped talking, walked to the side of the classroom and sat down. Gradually, through his silent presence, we all noticed and settled down.

### BREATHE!

It seems pretty obvious but you'd be surprised! If you find you have to suck in breath or you feel breathless, you may eventually feel vocally drained. Breath is your fuel for your sound. Without breath, you will be forced to use muscle tension in order to get your message across. Forget about "taking" a deep breath - it is too active. Rather, let your areas of tension go and feed in a sigh of relief, deep into your body. Tension gone - breath and voice free!

### more tips

- Attract attention other than by yelling - clap, blow a whistle, ring bells, bang drums.
- Stay in view and use eye contact. Use your presence to assert control.
- Warm up your voice at the start of the day.

Lucy Cornell, Voice Coach and Amanda Banfield, OHS Solutions

## NEED HELP?

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- Training in conducting risk assessments
- Writing safe work procedures
- Training in manual handling techniques
- Task analysis of your manual handling jobs



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