

Working With The Media

Tips For Success

- **BE RESPONSIVE**
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- Be Proactive
 - Prepare a “Media Kit” containing bulleted facts about your topic (along with citations for sources). Include your contact information and a brief description of qualifications. Reporters like statistics that reinforce and provide a “snapshot” overview. Include a list of reputable websites for additional reference.
 - Don’t wait for reporters or editors to call you; if you know they have done stories in the past relating to your topic, provide your information and offer to be a resource for future stories.

- Be Prepared – Know the main points you want to make and be able to clearly and succinctly state them. Even if the reporter doesn’t ask a question directly related to your points, find a way to work it in and explain why they are important to the story.

- Position yourself as a resource for future information or future stories. Provide additional information or offer to help find someone else who can answer certain questions. Always bring extra info.

- Make it easy – think about what kinds of questions reporters might ask and who else they might like to interview. Have contact information for additional interviews i.e. physicians, consumers, representatives from organizations, etc. (But ALWAYS clear it with these people first to make certain they can be prepared and that they agree with and support your position.)

- Provide statistics – this is an excellent way for media outlets to quickly “show and tell” a story. This is great for print or TV. Have a few statistics printed on a separate page that you can provide.
- Stay on target – remember why you’re there. Many reporters will attempt to “bend” a story to match their perceptions. You can disagree with reporters or simply say, “Well, I can see how you might have that impression, but in reality...” Stick to the facts. Do not include personal feelings that are unsubstantiated. Do NOT comment on the actions of others unless it is positive or you can clearly demonstrate a direct negative outcome from their actions.
- Create a “Media” folder with a contact list for all of your local press outlets, along with your Media Kit materials. Having the right tools readily available always makes any job easier.
- Use your allies. When asked for an interview or when pursuing an interview, have some backup or alternatives if you are unavailable at a specific time. Join forces with others who support your position or who can add some other dimensions to the story – think like a reporter! Be sure to provide contact information for your allies (but only after checking their willingness and availability). Never provide personal contact information for anyone without first getting his/her approval. Otherwise, they won’t be your ally for very long!
- Provide the “warm, fuzzy” story – reporters always want to know how this affects the everyday family or person. Have a story ready and be able to provide contact information. Again, be certain to get the appropriate approval before giving out contact information.
- Reporters are people, too. Remember, these are often young reporters with limited time and experience who need to complete a task. Make it easy, take a little time to educate, be responsive and polite... and reporters will come back to you again and again.
- Know what YOU want this story to be and keep making your points!

- **Above all else, if you say you will be available.... Be available! Set up a protocol for media calls in your office and be certain everyone is aware of your efforts.**
- **BE RESPONSIVE!**

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