

media relations

**it's
YOUR
move
prevent
AIDS**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service

CDC

Table of Contents

Sections

Section One:	Putting Media Relations in Perspective	4
Section Two:	Creating and Sustaining Media Interest	21
Section Three:	Tapping into Specialized Media	31

Resources

Resources for Working with the Media.....	38
Media Terms	42
Sample News Release.....	44
Sample Media Advisory.....	45
Preparing for an Interview	50
Interviewing: What to Wear.....	53
Make-up Tip Sheet	54

Worksheets

News Release Checklist	43
Media Contact Report	46
Media Tracking Log.....	47
Checklist for Press Conference Location.....	48

Introduction

This kit is to be used as a guide for reaching the mass media and is designed to provide technical information on how to reach and use the three primary mass media channels, television, radio and print.

The first section, *Putting Media Relations in Perspective*, discusses how media relations should be set within the context of an HIV/AIDS communications program and provides information about how to understand and work directly with the media.

The second section, *Creating and Sustaining Media Interest*, discusses ways to build media interest around HIV/AIDS communications efforts using different publicity tools and action-oriented tactics, such as news conferences and special events.

The third section, *Tapping into Specialized Media*, discusses how to match targeted HIV/AIDS communications messages with the proper media and provides resources for reaching specialized media markets.

Also included in this kit are several worksheets that are designed to assist you in handling your media relations efforts.

As a reference source for working with the media, this kit is designed to complement your HIV/AIDS communications program and is not meant to be used as a guide for development of an HIV/AIDS communications plan.

Putting Media Relations in Perspective

Media relations, also referred to as public relations, is one of the most effective ways to reach your target audience. Media relations involves using the news and public affairs programming in your area as a channel to deliver HIV/AIDS messages to your target audience.

It is important to remember that working with the mass media is only one component of an HIV/AIDS communications program and that any media relations efforts should fit within and support your organization's overall HIV/AIDS communications efforts.

To make sure that your media efforts complement your HIV/AIDS communications program, you should review what your agency is trying to accomplish with its communications program. Doing this will help you develop appropriate media activities and messages that are consistent with your HIV/AIDS program goals and objectives.

When planning your media relations efforts, review your HIV/AIDS communications program and ask yourself:

- What is the goal that you want to accomplish in your HIV/AIDS prevention program? Remember that the goal should be quantifiable and directly related to the identified problem.
- What changes are needed in knowledge and awareness, perception, or behavior to accomplish the program goal (the communications objective)?
- Who are you trying to reach or who is your target population? For example, this population could be defined as those most at risk for HIV/AIDS.
- What are the messages that must be developed and conveyed to effect the desired changes in your target audience?
- Does the community or general population have a role to play? What do you want the community at large to do?

- What types of media outreach would be efficient and cost effective for accomplishing the above?

Approaching your media relations efforts within the context of your HIV/AIDS program will help you communicate clearly and effectively about HIV/AIDS. Thinking strategically will provide stability to what is essentially a moving target: the continuing change in attitudes and behaviors among the public and the media toward HIV/AIDS.

Understanding the Media

There's no mystery to effective media relations. Regardless of the types of media outlets and activities you choose to use, the key elements for developing a rapport with the media are understanding what the media want in a story and making sure that the information is provided to them clearly and quickly.

Whether you are tapping into news, public service programming or the entertainment media, reporters and producers seek similar story elements: audience appeal; issues that stimulate debate, controversy and even conflict; stories that generate high ratings and increased readership; and fresh angles and twists for an issue that will sustain public interest.

In general, reporters and journalists dislike and try to avoid covering topics or issues that are “old hat”; duplicating stories with a competitor; printing inaccuracies or writing incomplete stories; receiving calls when on deadline; having someone persist if a story is rejected; or being pressured to cover a topic because someone “went over their head.”

To demonstrate your understanding of what reporters, journalists and producers look for, be sure to:

1. Contact the “right” reporter, with the “right” publication, at the “right” time. Don't, for example, try to “pitch” a story about condom efficacy to a business editor.
2. Realize that all media operate within tight deadlines. Be sure to respond quickly to requests for additional information or interviews. If possible, respond within the hour.
3. Be honest. If you don't know an answer, say so and offer to find out. If you can't find out, say so.
4. Be prepared to provide information and answer questions in depth once you've gotten a reporter's interest.

Differences in News Media

Because each medium has its own format and requirements for what's "timely" and what's "news," a story may not be equally appropriate for television, radio and print. When targeting your media, keep in mind that each has its own format:

- Television is a highly visual medium, producing interesting visuals that will make the story more interesting or easier to understand. B-roll (background footage), slides or other graphics are often used by TV producers as part of segments.
- Television news is brief, often reducing complete issues to 30 or 60 second segments using short "soundbites." For TV interviews, remember that brief is best.
- In radio, as in television, your spokesperson must be able to speak in short (10-15 seconds) "soundbites." The radio interviewee's tone, firmness and lack of hesitancy in responding to questions contribute to the credibility of the message. Preparing before the interview and being sure the interview is conducted with few audible distractions (such as papers being shuffled, office mates talking or the humming of computers or other office equipment) will increase the "sound quality" of the interview.
- Newspaper and magazine articles generally provide a more in-depth treatment of a subject, although interviews are usually heavily edited. Print reporters may also use direct quotes from reports or press statements and be able to incorporate case studies or testimonials into their finished product. Offer these if you have them. Also offer simple graphics and suggest possible photo opportunities that might help explain or add depth to your story.
- Consider using a wire service if the story appeal goes beyond your local area. Most wire services have local bureaus and only require a news release to get coverage.

The different deadlines for TV, radio and print media:

- **Television:** "day of" for breaking news, usually by 10 a.m. to make the 6 p.m. news; several days in advance for public announcements. (Public service announcements usually require 2-4 weeks to get onto a radio/TV rotation cycle.)
- **Radio:** depends on the story, but "day of" is usually all right for breaking news; several days in advance for notice of public events.
- **Daily morning newspapers:** 2 or 3 p.m. the afternoon before.
- **Daily evening newspapers:** early morning the day of issue.

- **Weekly newspapers:** 3-5 days before the issue date.
- **Monthly magazines:** 6-8 weeks before publication.

Relationships with the News Media

Emphasize the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships with the media, which will be enhanced by:

- A. Good timing.** Take advantage of opportunities to establish positive relationships with the news media, such as when your program has a new media contact person or new director. The program's media contact should initiate calling the media (to introduce oneself, set up a visit to the media outlet by the media contact and/or new director) and not wait for the media to come to the program. Don't allow the first contact with the media to be when something tragic, rushed or controversial is happening because it will be harder to correct misinformation.
- B. Periodic mailings.** Periodically send the media items of interest and audio-visual aids (slides, high quality stock video) about the issue to remind them that you are an expert contact, interested in keeping them current on the issue so that the public receives accurate information and a source for ideas for story angles.
- C. One news contact.** Establish one primary contact at each media organization (assignment editor or health reporter) and call or write to compliment them when they do an accurate, balanced story about your issue.
- D. Program spokesperson.** Establish (and let the media and your staff know) who your program's one point of contact is for the media; this strengthens the relationship between the media and your organization as well as ensures that your organization "speaks with one voice."
- E. Anticipating their needs.** Anticipate the needs of the news media; for example, call them periodically to offer interviewees and/or statistics when the news "heats up" concerning anything related to your issue.
- F. Other contacts.** Recommend to the media other good contacts concerning your issue.
- G. Heads-up.** Call to give the media a "heads-up" about an anticipated announcement, new legislation, new research results, etc., so they can get prepared. When appropriate, use embargo ground rules during telephone calls and on news releases. Indicate "embargoed until ___" to let reporters and journalists know that the information they are reading is being released first to them and will not be officially released to the public until the specified date. Indicate "for immediate release" when you want the information to get picked up by the media immediately. This is an example of the pay off from establishing and maintaining positive relationships with media.

Organizing Your Expertise

Media Lists

Working successfully with the media over the long term requires establishing good, ongoing relationships with a number of reporters. One tool for establishing and maintaining these relationships is a well-organized, up-to-date media list.

A media list includes names, addresses, phone and fax numbers of the reporters from various media outlets who cover HIV/AIDS and related issues.

If possible, organize your media list so it can be sorted by:

- Type of media
- City
- Size of readership
- Type of readership (general, Hispanic, African American, etc.)
- Type of reporter (news, health, consumer, etc.)

In addition to this information, consider annotating the list with comments on a particular reporter or producer's background, interests and previous stories or programs on HIV/AIDS.

Make the list thorough, including every reporter or producer in your area who is likely to report on HIV/AIDS. In many instances there may be more than one reporter at a particular media outlet that you will need to include.

You should also try to get HIV/AIDS issues covered by reporters who don't normally cover AIDS issues. For example, you may be able to interest the food editor in doing a story on "Meals on Wheels" for people with AIDS. Other angles you could explore with the appropriate reporters are the religious and business aspects of AIDS or AIDS as a women's issue.

If you are not familiar with reporters who cover the HIV/AIDS issues in your area, spend some time finding out who they are. Look for reporters' names or bylines on articles about HIV/AIDS or related issues. Close observation of who's covering what may also give you an idea of the approach a particular paper or reporter is likely to take on your issues.

If you are not familiar with local media other than the daily newspaper and a few television or radio stations, use a media directory, such as Bacon's Publicity Checker, to complete your list (see attached *Resources for Working With the Media*).

Consider including the following on your list:

- Newspapers (dailies, weeklies, monthlies, college/university papers and any small community newspapers, such as shoppers' circulars or papers targeted at specific audiences such as Hispanics, African Americans, religious groups and the business community)
- City and regional magazines
- Local trade and business publications
- State or local bureaus of national wire services (such as AP, UPI and Reuters)
- Local radio and TV stations (including their news, talk show, call-in and community/public affairs programs)
- University radio and television stations (including news programs, talk show programs, call-in programs, and community/public affairs programs)
- Local cable television stations
- Public broadcasting stations (which may not have news operations, but may have relevant programs on health or community affairs)
- State or local bureaus of national television and radio networks (if available in your community)
- Public information officers at area military bases. These bases house thousands of young adults who can be effectively reached through the base/post newsletter and on-base radio and television stations. Many military family housing areas have cable stations; therefore, your PSAs, film or guest interviews may reach many age groups, not just single service members

Call each newspaper and TV and radio station and ask for the names of the reporters who cover HIV/AIDS and related issues. Remember that at larger media outlets, there may be several reporters who might cover an HIV/AIDS story, depending on the angle or type of story. Your media list should therefore include the following:

- Assignment editors at wire service bureaus
- Assignment editors at radio and television stations
- Producers of health, community and public affairs shows on television and radio
- News and metro/community reporters at newspapers
- Health and consumer reporters who may cover hard news as well as feature stories on issues such as HIV/AIDS prevalence, statistics, reports, advances in treatment and so forth
- Medical/science reporters who cover breakthroughs in research surrounding the diagnosis, epidemiology and the testing and treatment of HIV/AIDS
- Lifestyle reporters who write people-oriented stories, such as a profile on a particular person who has HIV/AIDS, or a story about HIV among young people 25 years of age and under
- Newspaper and magazine calendar editors who list the time, date and place of community-based HIV/AIDS events

Interviews

You may receive requests for interviews. When you do, it's handy to have a checklist of questions you want to ask the reporter or producer right away so that you can determine whether and how you can help. The following tips should help you prepare for interviews with various types of media.

Television Interviews

When you're on television, your appearance counts. Remember:

- Wear comfortable clothes.
- Wear solid colors that are flattering. Avoid wearing shirts or blouses that are bright white (which may reflect glare) or that have busy patterns or designs that might appear to vibrate on the air and distract viewers' attention.

- Don't wear flashy ties or jewelry. Avoid dangling jewelry that might reflect light or make noise.
- Don't wear glasses unless you can't see the interviewer without squinting. Be aware that contacts may start to dry out from the hot lights.
- Arrive at the studio early. This may give you the opportunity to talk with the interviewer about the points you wish to cover. If there are other guests, try to determine their points of view and areas of expertise.
- Try to get comfortable on the set. Adjust your microphone and chair. If it's a swivel chair, ask the stagehand to lock it so you won't be tempted to turn in it during the interview.
- Remember to maintain good posture and avoid unnecessary gestures. Sit erect, with your legs crossed and arms folded in your lap or comfortably resting on the arms of your chair.
- Keep in mind approximately how much time you have left (but don't look at your watch).

Radio Interviews

As with TV appearances, it's your voice that counts in the delivery of your message on the radio. The audiences in radio are often more specialized than television audiences. Certain formats or programs attract very specific listeners — teenagers, older adults, minorities and so forth. Some radio programs, such as call-in programs, involve direct interaction with the audience.

These interviews may be live or taped, edited or unedited. Follow the same general preparation and rehearsal tips as for television, while keeping these additional points in mind:

- It's okay to refer to notes on radio, but don't make noise when you're locating notes. Index cards are better than sheets of paper.
- Speak clearly. Your voice is all you have. Watch your speaking mannerisms. Frequent "uh's" and "er's" sound worse on radio than anywhere else.
- Bring an audio cassette with you and ask the station to make a copy of the interview for you.

Here are some additional tips for call-in shows:

- Keep your comments brief. Give callers plenty of opportunities to ask questions and express their views.

- The show host or the program producer will screen incoming calls. However, if an irrelevant question is asked, move quickly to a key point.
- Always be courteous with callers. The host will handle any callers who become difficult or rude.

If your spokesperson is asked to appear on a radio or television news or talk show to discuss the HIV/AIDS issue, in almost all cases you will deal with a program's producer, assistant producer or an assignment editor rather than the program host.

Be sure that this person gives you the following information:

- Name of the program and the station's affiliation (e.g., NBC, CNN)
- Audience for the show (e.g., older women, young black women, middle-aged men, teens)
- Subject to be discussed
- Name and phone number of a contact person (usually the producer)
- Time and place of interview. This could be in a studio or even at your office; radio interviews may be done over the phone
- Name of the program's host (e.g., the person who will actually be on the air with you)
- Format of the program (talk show, public affairs program, news program, call-in)
- Length of the interview/program
- Whether the show is live or taped. (If you can, supply a tape for a copy of the interview or program.)
- When the program will be aired (if taped)
- Other guests. Confirm this the day before. (The "guest list" may change several times.) Use this information to anticipate possible questions or issues that may come up. You can always decline an interview if you feel you'd be unreasonably attacked by another guest.

Phone Interviews

Print and radio reporters are the most likely to request phone interviews (print — because it saves time and the reporter can jot down key points while you're talking; radio — because it can be done "live" without the person being interviewed having to come to the station). When talking with reporters on the phone:

- Make sure you have a good phone connection, especially if your interview is for a radio broadcast. If the connection is bad, arrange with the station who will call back, hang up and try again.
- Turn off noise-makers in your office, such as air conditioners, heaters and photocopiers. Close your office door and arrange to have your calls ring at another desk.
- Know in advance whether the interview is going to be live or taped and, if taped, whether it's to be edited. If it's going to be edited, you'll need to think about answering in short sound bites — snappy answers between 10 and 20 seconds long.
- Talk into the receiver in normal, conversational tones.

For print interviews, ask:

- The name of the publication, name of the reporter, his/her phone and fax numbers.
- The deadline. (This is particularly important if you need time to contact the spokesperson or check facts. If you need to call the reporter back, be sure to do so as soon as possible. If you know you cannot meet the deadline, be honest and say so.)
- The type of information being sought from you or your agency — background information, a quote, a response to an event in the news.
- The "angle" the reporter is taking on the story. (Most reporters work off a news "peg" — a major event in the country or community. The most common type of reporting is to add information that would confirm or debunk the original news peg.)
- The names of people the reporter has already spoken with or plans to interview.

Other things to remember:

- Always be prepared. Go into an interview knowing the top 2-3 messages you want to convey.

- Be realistic and positive in answering questions. Don't repeat a negative. Rather than saying "No, we can't answer questions on specific sexual behaviors," say, "We are focusing on increasing awareness that HIV can be transmitted through sexual activity."
 - Never say anything "off the record." It may end up on the evening news. If you don't want to divulge information publicly, don't tell the reporter. If you don't know an answer, don't fudge. Admit to not knowing and volunteer to find out.
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Organizing Information for the Media

The most common way of approaching the media for a news story is through the use of media alerts and news releases. (Even if you use the phone to initially contact a reporter with a story idea, you will always want to follow up with written materials.)

Media Alerts

A media alert or media advisory is a brief (usually one-page) notice that alerts the media to an upcoming event. It tells what, when, where, who and why and provides the name and phone number of a contact person at your agency.

Media advisories are usually faxed two days before an event. Check with individual outlets to see if faxing is appropriate.

Always be sure to send your media alerts to wire services and ask them to list your event on their “daybooks.” “Daybooks” are calendars of upcoming news events which are kept by wire services, such as AP, UPI, and Reuters. Some wire services distribute a list of the coming week’s events on Friday afternoon.

News Releases

A news release serves a vital function in media relations programs. Often it is the only source of information a reporter or editor has on your “news,” and therefore is where you position your information. (See sample news release in the resources folder.)

Depending on the type of story, either a news release or feature release can be used. Use a news release when you have “hard news” to offer, such as when you:

- Hire a new director or other high-level staff person.
- Begin offering a new program or service.
- Announce the results of an important report, poll or study.
- Receive a grant, award or other form of recognition.
- Want to help the media understand the local impact of a national news event.
- Want to take a position on a significant issue or comment on an important development.

News releases must contain, usually in 2-3 pages, what journalists call the five “W’s”: who is involved; what happened; when did it happen; where did it happen; why or how did it happen? These questions should be answered in one or two sentences in the lead paragraph. Most reporters decide whether or not to read the rest of the release based on the first paragraph...so make it concise and interesting!

Print editors tend to cut “from the bottom up” rather than rewrite releases. The most essential facts should be put in the first 1-2 paragraphs, with less important information following.

Feature releases can be used when you have a “soft news” story. Feature releases can be longer (4-5 pages) and should capture the story you want to pitch. Try to write a colorful headline to capture reporters’ attention. Examples of feature stories include:

- Profile of an active volunteer
- An exceptional HIV/AIDS education program at a local business

Media Kits

The media kit is a set of materials developed especially for the media. Often organizations have a standard media kit that contains informational materials that serve as an introduction to an organization. For major news events, the standard kit should be supplemented with fresh information related to the event.

Examples of materials that might be included in a standard kit are:

Backgrounders and fact sheets, such as:

- Statistics on prevalence of HIV infection/AIDS in the state

- Information on your organization and its AIDS prevention programs
- Information on national, state or local AIDS hotlines
- Rolodex card for use by the media in contacting your agency about HIV/AIDS issues
- Brief, one-page biographies of key agency officials and/or spokespersons
- Sample brochures, if applicable, available to target populations
- Photographs
- Camera-ready graphics, such as charts and logos

To supplement the basic kit for a special event, consider using:

- News release(s) on the event
- Biographies of people (speakers, panel members, etc.) relevant to the event in which you are trying to interest the reporter
- Copies of relevant written materials, such as the report being released, statements to be given at a news conference, speeches, etc.

A Note on Correcting Errors

Sometimes mistakes and errors will appear in stories no matter how much information you provide or how thoroughly you discuss an issue with a reporter. However, asking for a retraction of a news story is serious and should be done only when there are major factual errors. The media rarely make retractions on the basis of how a story is done or other subjective information.

If you are considering requesting a retraction, first:

1. Contact the reporter. Share your concerns with the reporter and provide the correct information. Ask what will be done with the new information. If it's a small factual error, the most you can usually hope for is a correction in the next day's paper (it's unlikely a new story would be run). Sometimes, you might be able to interest them in "making up" for the error by doing another story down the road.
2. If the media will not correct the situation to your satisfaction, or if you believe the issue requires more clarification, write a letter to the editor or organization explaining your organization's position. Make the tone of your letter calm and factual, rather than accusatory.

5. Take the public relations initiative. If the error is substantial and the reporter is unresponsive to or uncooperative with your request to make amends, then you need to issue a news release that provides the right information. Confine the release to a discussion of the facts; don't restate the original error or assign blame. You may also want to contact the reporter's editor or news director and request clarification or correction. Be sure you have all the documentation needed to back up your claim.

Organizing for the Future

Because media relations is an ongoing process, it is helpful to take the time to find out what works and what doesn't work so that refinements can be made in the future. There are many different ways to get feedback on your messages, materials and relationships with the media:

1. **Track media impressions.** Media impressions equal the number of readers, listeners or viewers served by a particular media outlet. Media impressions are a rough way of gauging the potential impact of a story—basically whether your efforts are reaching more or fewer people. When developing your media list, get circulation or estimated audience numbers for each media outlet (these can be obtained from media resource books or the outlet itself). Tracking media impressions can be done by hiring a clipping service, a vendor who monitors the media and clips or reports on stories of interest to your agency. Collecting and analyzing these clips can provide invaluable feedback: How many articles were written? How many were written using your materials? How many articles incorporated your key messages? What, if any, negative messages were part of the story?
2. **Determine the timeliness of your media materials.** Are your press releases getting to reporters in time? If not, and if you are having difficulty generating media coverage, your distribution process may be the problem. Check with reporters to determine if they recall receiving your materials, if they get them in time and if they use them.
3. **Track the distribution of media materials.** Develop an inventory system to track how many news releases, feature releases, media kits and other materials are distributed. Keep notes on when they were sent and to how many people. This can help you determine whether you are releasing too little or too much information.
4. **Track your media contacts.** Try to track all contact (e.g., phone conversations) your agency has with the media. This could be as simple as circulating a form that all staff and volunteers must fill out if they speak to a member of the media. Examining your media contact forms can help you find answers to questions such as how many media inquiries do we receive in a week, a month, a year? Are they increasing or decreasing?

5. Monitor your media list. Keep your media list up to date and track its growth to give you a sense of whether you are reaching more or fewer reporters. A smaller list is not necessarily bad; the list may simply be more refined. Remember also to refine your annotations on the list to keep up with changes in a reporter's interests, coverage of the HIV/AIDS issue and so forth.
6. Compile samples of and statistics on media coverage of your agency for use in your program's internal and external marketing efforts.

Keep a library of taped stories, interviews and public affairs shows so that this information can be used within your agency's own program office.

Creating and Sustaining Media Interest

Choosing the Right Tactic

There are many tried and true means of attracting media attention. Some, like op-eds and letters to the editor, are useful for framing your position on an issue. Others, like news conferences and special events, are media relations activities that require more time and planning.

For any of these tactics, however, ask yourself how and why this activity would help your overall communications program:

- What issue or message are we trying to address?
- What message do we need to communicate in order to address that issue?
- Will the message reach our target audience?
- Is the message a newsworthy one (e.g., is there an element of controversy, an intriguing local angle, timeliness or human/emotional appeal in the message)?
- Is this activity a cost-effective means of reaching the intended audience?

This strategic approach focuses your media relations activities on your communications objective while still permitting considerable flexibility in deciding how to reach that objective.

Reaching Broadcast Media

Video News Releases

The video news release (VNR) is a carefully constructed and controlled 90-second to 2-minute news story that contains a subtle yet visible message about your product or service.

Crafted especially for airing as a filler or “kicker” in news blocks, it must meet certain standards to be deemed broadcast-worthy. The most effective VNRs should:

- Have a legitimate news angle.
- Portray a technological breakthrough.
- Clarify an issue.
- Provide footage and sound-bites that a television station is unable to get on its own.

VNRs are not inexpensive. A quality piece without fancy graphics, animation or location shooting can cost around \$25,000 to produce and distribute. Avoid cost-cutting shortcuts; the pay-off could be a piece that does not meet broadcast standards. Producing a VNR will be most effective if you have a story that has national appeal and impact.

Audio News Releases

An audio news release (ANR) is the radio version of a VNR. It is a packaged, edited audiotape of a similar news story. Again, producing an ANR is fairly costly, so you may want to offer material that isn't packaged.

Reaching Print Media

Letters to the Editor

Most newspapers and magazines welcome letters from readers, especially if the letters are in response to recent articles. Letters to the editor may be in response to both positive and negative coverage.

Letters to the editor should clearly state:

- Who the letter is from (your agency spokesperson).
- The agency's perspective on why it has a problem with or is pleased about a story/issue.

- The specific points the organization wants to convey to readers about what's accurate and pertinent. (Make your most important point in the first paragraph or two because editing is at the discretion of the publication's editor. Limit letters to one page, no more than 400 words, typed double spaced.)

Send your letter promptly. Note: Not all letters to the editor are published. Don't be discouraged if it doesn't make it into print. Keep trying.

Op-Eds

Op-eds, usually 500-800 words in length, are so-called because they appear opposite the editorial page in a newspaper. These are opinion pieces representing a specific point of view on a current topic.

Unlike letters to the editor, you do not need to wait for a specific article to appear in order to submit an op-ed. However, a sense of timing increases the likelihood of publication. Look for opportunities to respond to a recent article, local or national legislation related to HIV/AIDS or to related topics (e.g., teen pregnancy, drugs, STDs, TB, etc.), a public event or public attitude.

Send op-eds, double-spaced, to the editorial page editor with a short letter asking the editor to consider the opinion piece for the op-ed page and to contact you if the piece is going to be used or if any additional information is needed.

News Conferences

It is appropriate to call a news conference when you have significant hard news to release, such as the results of an important study and their implications for your community.

First decide what needs to be announced and who will announce it. Determine how many speakers will be involved, what each one will say and whether you need someone else on hand to field questions.

Second, plan ahead as much as possible for the event. Here are some tips on the logistics:

- **Timing.** Hold the press conference in mid-morning (between 10 a.m. and noon). However, reporters for afternoon papers (who are on deadline in the morning) may not be able to attend until at least noon. Choose Tuesday-Thursday if possible and avoid the weekend; remember, your spokesperson needs to be available throughout the day of the press conference. Also, try to find out if there are other events and first-breaking news for that day; contact your local AP wire bureau to find out what is on its "daybook."

- **Length of time.** Keep the press conference to no more than 15 minutes; allow plenty of time for questions from reporters.
- **Location.** Choose somewhere convenient for the media and relevant to the news you have to announce. Be sure you can obtain the audio-visual equipment you'll need (podium, microphones, slide projector and screens or VCR). Allow enough room for the anticipated number of reporters and for camera crews if you expect television coverage. Rent a "mult box" that allows the media to tap into the public address system for better sound quality.
- **Signs.** Place professional-looking directional signs inside the entrance and at every turn that show media, participants and observers how to find the press conference quickly (media often are running late from another story). Directional signs can be recycled for other news events.
- **On-scene/door monitor.** Have an experienced news media contact stationed at the entrance to the room **throughout** the news conference to show late media representatives where to set up, distribute news kits (with news release and sometimes broadcast quality stock video), provide a quick run-down of who's available for interviews following the conference, and determine who they want to interview. Be sure to include in the news kits a printed copy of local, state and national statistics about your issue.
- **Follow-up contact person.** Give the news media a telephone number and contact person to answer follow up questions, verify titles, help with identifying people for photograph cutlines, etc.
- **Parking.** Arrange parking that is easy in and out (preferred is a block of reserved spots guarded prior to and during the entire event) for the media and speakers (and make sure that all are told about it beforehand).
- **Video/testimony opportunity.** Coordinate an opportunity to film video (with on-scene voluntary interviews with medical staff, patients, family members) appropriate for your topic. (A written release by the patient is normally required by most medical programs.) Interviews should be done as quickly as possible so as not to interfere with routines. The power of personal testimonies cannot be overemphasized, and the media use them constantly.
- **Mult Box Test.** Test run the mult box at least a week ahead of time so that substitutions or repairs can be made for problem machines.
- **Call-outs.** Make call-outs to the media the day before the event. The call has more impact if it comes from the program's primary media contact and is placed to the primary contact at the media organization (or to the assignment editor if the primary contact is unavailable); the caller should use some salesmanship to emphasize the importance of covering the event.

- **Announcement.** When possible, time your news conference with some significant announcement and tell the media beforehand that an announcement will be made about (your issue). This will often increase news coverage.
- **Aggressive follow-up.** Use active, not passive, follow-up. If some media can't attend the news conference, **PERSONALLY** hand-carry the information (and the news release) **TO THE ASSIGNMENT EDITOR** immediately following the event. If you mail the information, it will be stale information (i.e., not news) and very likely lost in the newsroom (if it even arrives there). The bottomline: you want coverage of your issue.
- **Kudos to others.** Recommend to your speakers that they publicly compliment (in news conferences, interviews and speeches) the cooperation and achievements of other organizations and individuals; this enhances community spirit and the credibility of your program (and gives the media another story angle).
- **Keep it short and simple.** Emphasize to interviewees that information to the news media should be in sound-bites, nonscientifically worded (for the public to understand) and informing the public how much they are at risk and how to protect themselves.
- **Other languages.** If you anticipate coverage by "other language" media, provide interviewees fluent in those languages. Provide all news kit items in those languages; also, have a second person fluent in those languages review written text to eliminate cultural insensitivities in wording.

Media outreach

- Send out a media alert 3-4 days before the news conference; call wire services to have the event put on the daybook. In urgent situations, all notification can be done by phone.
- Prepare materials, including a news release, biographies of speakers, copies of speakers' statements and other appropriate materials (such as copies of the report being released or charts and graphs used in a speaker's presentation).
- Track attendance. Have a media sign-up sheet at the door and provide name tags for each reporter or producer.

Special Events

Special events (i.e., local health fairs, AIDS Walks) require long-term planning and attention to detail. When developing the event and planning publicity, keep in mind who you want to reach. Tailor your event to suit the age, lifestyle and common interests of those you invite.

From a communications perspective, special events can be used to help:

- Create awareness about your agency (and perhaps other local agencies) and its services in a certain area or among a certain group of people.
- Create a local angle on a national or international AIDS-related issue or event.
- Create a platform for developing or deepening relationships with other community organizations.
- Extend the reach of an existing education or awareness campaign.
- Generate publicity.

To extend coverage of your event, set up a system for measuring the results of the event. This could include determining how many people attended, how much media coverage you received or how many volunteers were recruited. Post-event news releases then focus on these “accomplishments.”

To build excitement for the event and encourage media coverage:

- Plan your event around a national holiday or national calendar date.
- Look for ways to tie in with national HIV/AIDS campaigns, such as CDC’s America Responds to AIDS campaign.
- Take the event “on the road,” co-sponsoring a series of similar events in different communities.
- Consider having a radio or television station co-sponsor the event, which generates community good will for the station as well as potential free publicity for your event. Pick a station whose audience matches that for the event—an urban contemporary radio station for an event expected to attract young African American adults, for example. Try to work out additional ways to increase awareness of your HIV/AIDS issue for the week or day of the event by running America Responds to AIDS PSAs or by placing your spokesperson on relevant call-in or public affairs programs.
- Develop a theme for the event to attract both media and public attention. Use it on all publicity-related materials from invitations to media kits, buttons and banners.

- Allow plenty of planning time when selecting your date and time. Select a time of day and day of the week when your most important audiences will be available, and make sure the time is appropriate to the type of event. Also check to make sure your date does not conflict with other events. Local chambers of commerce, departments of tourism, newspapers and United Way chapters may keep a centralized calendar of community events.

Media relations for special events requires attention to detail. Well-planned publicity for a special event will not only attract more people, it will also create long-term awareness of your message.

Before the event:

- Contact reporters who cover community events and pitch the event as a feature story. Don't forget weekly or shoppers' newspapers.
- Call the community calendar reporters at area newspapers and television, cable and radio stations, asking them to place a calendar notice.
- Hand-deliver or mail invitations to the event two weeks in advance.
- No more than two to three days before the event, call each editor and reporter and ask them if they plan to attend. If they are interested, you should fax or send by messenger a copy of your media advisory. Explain special photo opportunities. In case they can't send a photographer, make sure you find out the newspaper's photo deadlines and arrange to get a black-and-white photo to them in time.
- The day before the event, call the media again to politely remind them about the event. Most television stations and daily newspapers do not decide what they'll cover until the day before or the day of an event.

During the event:

- Set up a media sign-in table with media kits.
- When the reporter(s) and photographer(s) arrive, spend time with them. If possible, set up interviews with appropriate people right away and escort the media to the appropriate spokesperson.
- Have someone from your agency take black-and-white photos to accompany articles in newsletters and other publications and for your own files.

After the event:

- Send a news release immediately afterward to any reporters who were unable to attend your event.

- Send follow-up letters to the editors of local newspapers, thanking the community and informing them of your success (monetary amount of donations raised for an important cause, community alliances forged, number of volunteers recruited).
- Write a follow-up article for inclusion in appropriate community publications. Illustrate with photos from the event.

Be Creative

Most people struggle with how to come up with that “big idea” that will attract public and media attention. Here are some tips on how to get started.

Hold a Brainstorming Session

The best ideas come from the meeting of several minds. Hold a brainstorming session to generate theme, event, speaker or program ideas. Here are some “rules” on how to conduct such a meeting:

- Keep the group a manageable size and the time limited. Have no more than six to eight people and insist on no more than one hour for the session. Shorter times are okay if the meeting has been productive.
- Invite people who can offer a different perspective. Having a few participants who are not immersed on a daily basis in your program can be very beneficial.
- Provide relevant information in advance. Consider writing on one sheet of paper the purpose of the meeting (e.g., getting ideas for a special event tied to World AIDS Day) and key information such as your communications objective, target audience, message and even your budget to give people something to “chew on” before coming to the brainstorming session.
- Establish the ground rules at the beginning of the meeting. It is the responsibility of the discussion leader to make the session productive and fun by emphasizing the following:

Every idea deserves to be heard. Brainstorming sessions are by nature freewheeling but directed discussions that should encourage one idea leading into another. People need to feel comfortable saying what pops into their minds without fear of criticism. The discussion leader must ensure that the group stays on track and doesn't get bogged down in criticizing an individual and his or her ideas.

This is not the place or time for analyzing the issue or discussing the merits of a program. *Focus on action-oriented ideas.*

- Set up a task force to work with corporate employee assistance program (EAP) administrators. Provide collateral materials to be distributed through EAPs (including buttons or stickers with the national or state AIDS hotline number) and cooperate on developing training in HIV/AIDS issues for EAP counselors. Also provide information to your task force about resources, such as Business Responds to AIDS (BRITA). For more information about BRITA, call 1- 800-458-5251.

Send a news release when the first corporation “signs up” for the program; be sure to send the release to city and regional business publications, chambers of commerce, union newsletters and corporate newsletters. Consider surveying EAP counselors after six months to a year and publicizing results of the survey.

- Work through the state library association to promote libraries as community outreach resources for HIV/AIDS-related information. Develop a kit for program directors at local libraries with ideas for outreach activities (such as hosting public forums) and offer materials available through your agency to carry out those activities (e.g., posters, PSAs, brochures, computerized reference/resource materials, directories of local AIDS service organizations, Spanish-language materials). Announce the program during National Library Week.
 - Develop and use a media tracking log (see the worksheets pocket). This will assist you in your efforts to track and evaluate reporters/journalists who cover the story, and provide follow-up opportunities to contact the media with other stories.
-

Tapping Into Specialized Media

Matching the Medium with the Message

The increasing fragmentation and specialization of the media is good news for health communicators trying to reach relatively narrow audiences with a specific HIV/AIDS prevention message. Moreover, thanks to marketing research developed for advertisers, communications professionals have sophisticated information about which media are read or watched and by whom.

If you're trying to reach specific segments of the community, such as African Americans, Hispanics or young adults, a key strategy would be to approach the media that serve these special audiences. Here are some tips on matching the medium with the message.

Cable

In order to win exclusive contracts to provide cable service to counties and municipalities, most cable companies offer access to studio facilities and set aside community programming as part of their competitive bid. As a result, most cable markets provide strong opportunities for health communicators to participate in public affairs programs and to broadcast live or taped coverage of conferences, seminars or speeches of importance to the public.

Establish relationships with all the cable station managers in your area; most will run any broadcast quality video of interest to a general audience. Some have talk shows for which you can provide guests.

Tips on Working with Cable

- Explore opportunities to air PSAs on local access channels.

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Tips on Working with Cable

- Explore opportunities to air PSAs on local access channels.

- Take advantage of local access channels' "community bulletin boards" that carry announcements of special events.
- Work with county health departments to develop programming ideas and materials for local access cable channels. Recruit spokespersons from qualified county officials and community leaders; their local standing and recognition will help them gain access to county-based cable programs.
- Cable programming reaches nearly every demographic target. Use this "ready-made" audience segmentation to reach the groups in which you are most interested. For example, network cable programming like that on Black Entertainment Network, Univision and Lifetime attract very specific audiences—in these cases, African Americans, Hispanics and women.
- Consider local talk shows that appear on network and cable stations as a good medium for reaching specific audiences with health information.
- Get to know the weekend assignment editors at the television/radio and newspaper organization. They often have slow news days and are looking for story ideas.

The Spanish-Speaking Market

Spanish-speaking people make up the second-largest minority group in the country (8.5% of the total population) and as a group grew more than 50% during the 1980s, according to the 1990 Census.

Following are facts on the media habits of America's Spanish-speaking population:

- Television and radio are the preferred media, with approximately the same amount of time spent with each medium. Adults over 18 watch an average 2.4 hours of Spanish language television per day (and 1.5 hours of English-language) and listen to 2 hours of Spanish-language radio (1.2 hours of English-language).
- Univision and Telemundo are the country's largest Spanish-language cable networks, with approximately 400 and 38 affiliates, respectively. The two reach approximately 35% of the Spanish-speaking households in the United States.
- Both Univision and Telemundo affiliates have the flexibility to develop their own news and information programming.
- Most Spanish-language radio originates in local markets, and stations gear their format to local audiences. There are currently more than 250 Spanish radio stations in the United States, reaching an estimated 95% of the U.S. Spanish-

speaking population. Most of the listening audience is 18-44 years old (an age group often targeted by AIDS awareness campaigns), with more men than women listeners.

- Several Spanish-language radio syndicates broadcast news and educational and public affairs shows that may represent opportunities for placing PSAs and programming on HIV/AIDS.
- Hispanics read both Spanish- and English-language newspapers, with 4 out of 10 reading the former and 5 out of 10 the latter. Less than an hour a day is spent reading newspapers.
- There are approximately 50 daily Spanish-language newspapers in the United States and another 100 or so community papers published once or twice a week.

Tips on Using Spanish-Language Media

Offer your media materials in Spanish. Eight out of 10 Hispanic adults report that they are more comfortable with Spanish than English. In fact, some papers will use only releases in the Spanish language.

Use Spanish-speaking spokespersons and experts (physicians, health officials, government officials or community representatives, for example). Be sure that person speaks the idiomatic Spanish of your primary target audience.

The African-American Market

African Americans are the largest minority group in the United States, constituting 12.1% of the population. There are several excellent ways to reach African-American audiences:

- Radio is the most important medium for reaching this audience, with African-American adults spending 46% of their media time with radio (vs. 34% for television, 14% for newspapers and 6% for magazines). African Americans listen to twice as much radio as whites and report choosing radio as their first source of news. Radio also reaches more African American adults than adults of other groups. In fact, the top five format preferences of African Americans include Urban Contemporary, News/Talk, Religious, Adult Contemporary and Top 40.
- Major African American-owned radio syndicates include the National Black Network and the United Broadcast Company. Depending on the concentration of syndicated stations in your state, you might get efficiencies of scale by working through a syndicate rather than approaching stations individually.

- The leading African American television network is cable's Black Entertainment Television.
- There are 126 newspapers in the United States aimed at the African-American market. Although the African-American community is the largest minority group, there are other black communities that you should be aware of. For example, in many urban areas, you will likely find large groups of recent and not-so-recent immigrants from various corners of the world, including Africa, South America, Haiti and numerous Caribbean islands. Remember that many of these individuals come from different cultures and may have concerns and sensitivities with which you should become familiar. Understanding these differences is the first step in developing appropriate messages tailored for these audiences. To ensure that your messages are culturally sensitive, you may want to identify community leaders from the groups you hope to approach and ask for their assistance.

Tips on Working with African American Media

- In publicity-related activities, use African American spokespersons, celebrities and experts to increase your credibility with the target audience.
- Write news releases in the style of the particular paper (feature, hard news, anecdotal), recognizing that many of these papers have few staff and will not spend time rewriting your news.
- Take advantage of the draw and diversity in African American-oriented radio formats—rhythm and blues, soul, rap, gospel, jazz and urban contemporary—to target different elements of the African American community. Nearly all of these formats have public affairs programming and many have news.

The Asian-American Market

Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders compose the third-largest minority group after African Americans and Hispanic/Latinos. They are the fastest growing community of color in the United States and are extremely diverse. Federal data collectors currently recognize the following subcategories: Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, Phillipino and other Asian/Pacific Islanders. Collectively, these groups have more than 100 languages and dialects.

- Asian-Americans account for 5% of the U.S. population and are the fastest growing minority group; their population grew 108% between 1980 and 1990 and will grow to 17.1 million by 2010.

- More than half of all Asian Americans live in the Western United States. The Asian American population is 22% Chinese, 21% Philippino, 19% Japanese, 10% Asian Indian, 9.5% Korean and 18.5% other Asian cultures.
- Magachine is the only bilingual (Chinese Mandarin and English) international lifestyle magazine for Chinese Americans. For more information, write to Magachine, 590 Broadway, New York, NY, 10015 or call 212-941-7488.

The Native American and Alaskan Native Market

Native North Americans are not one people, but many nations, each with its own language, traditions and history. There are more than 500 Native American tribes and Alaskan Native villages in the United States.

- According to the 1990 Census, more than half of all Native Americans live in standard metropolitan statistical areas. Oklahoma has the largest Native American population, while California has only a few reservations and ranches.
- In 1968 the tribal college was created exclusively to educate American Indians living on reservations who had few opportunities to obtain a post-secondary education near where they lived. Today tribal colleges serve 12,000 students. For more information on tribal college, contact the American Indian Higher Education Consortium; 513 Capital Center; Washington, DC; 202-544-9289.
- For more information on how to reach Native Americans, contact the director of the Native American Journalists Association (NAJA); 1435 East Franklin; Minneapolis, MN 55404.

The Young Adult Market

Like nearly every segment of the population today, young people get most of their information from television and radio. However, in most communities there are other media channels you can work through as well.

Tips on Reaching Young Adults

- Consider targeting college and university media, including those aimed not only at students but at those who may influence student behavior (parents, alumni, faculty and administration). All colleges and universities are not alike. You may have to structure your message differently for a smaller, church-affiliated college

with a more homogeneous student population than for a large state university with a diverse student population.

- For print placement, ask the institution's public relations or public information officer how to get in touch with appropriate editors or reporters at the following:
 - student newspapers
 - alumni magazines
 - faculty publications
 - administration publications
 - campus chapters of sororities and fraternities
 - student union representatives

Many college papers are outstanding and worthy of special attention.

In addition, work with college radio and TV stations, many of which broadcast into the local community.

- Take advantage of radio's ability to target messages to young audiences. Top 40, rock and urban contemporary stations have large and loyal listenerships. Some stations might be interested in co-sponsoring a special event such as a street fair or concert aimed at increasing awareness about HIV/AIDS in its listening audience. Work with the station to build additional publicity, such as running PSAs or focusing call-in programs on HIV/AIDS the week or day of your special event.
- Contact university journalism and public relations department heads to propose student projects promoting your issue. Professors are often looking for realistic, measurable learning opportunities for students.

APPENDICES

Worksheets

Resources for Working with the Media

Broadcast, Cable, Print

1. **If You Want Air Time...** 32 pages. A guide to developing and placing PSAs, stories and campaign calendars for broadcast media. \$3.00. To order, write: Publications Department; National Association of Broadcasters; 1771 N Street, N.W.; Washington, D.C. 20036.
2. **Media How-to Notebook.** Available for \$5.00 from Media Alliance; Fort Mason; Building D; San Francisco, CA 94125.
3. **How to Tell Your Story.** A media resource guide. Available for \$8.00 (\$4.00 for non-profits) from Foundation for American Communications; 3800 Barham Boulevard, Suite 409; Los Angeles, CA 90068.

The following media directories can be used to develop a list of contacts in your state or community. Many are quite expensive; check with your local library to see if it carries current copies that you could use.

1. **Bacon's Media Directories.** Bacon's TV/Radio Directory, Magazine Directory and Newspaper Directory list stations or publications with address, phone number and key contacts. Updated annually. For costs and subscription information, call (800) 621-0561, (312) 922-2400 in Illinois, or write Bacon's Media Directories; 332 S. Michigan Avenue; Chicago, IL 60604.
2. **Gebbie's.** Directory of newspapers, radio stations, television stations, magazines, business papers, minority press and news syndicates. Updated annually. For costs and subscription information, call (914) 255-7560 or write Gebbie Press; P.O. Box 1000; New Paltz, NY 12561.
3. **Broadcasting Yearbook.** Published by the Associated Press. Provides audience figures, demographic information, advertising rates and much more on radio, television, cable outlets and satellites. Updated annually. For costs and subscription information, call (800) 821-4747 or write AP; 1705 DeSales Street, N.W.; Washington, D.C. 20036.

4. **Contacts.** Directories of television stations, news bureaus, cable contacts, radio contacts and syndicated columnists. Published by BPI Communications and updated annually. For costs and subscription information, call (212) 764-7300 or write BPI Media Services; 1515 Broadway; New York, NY 10036.
5. **Hudson's.** Directory of Washington, D.C., news media contacts. Updated annually. For costs and subscription information, call (202) 737-4434 or write Chittenden Press Service; 1265 National Press Building; Washington, D.C. 20045.
6. **Editor & Publisher Yearbook.** Provides information on editors and publishers of newspapers. Published by Editor & Publisher magazine and updated annually. For costs and subscription information, call (212) 675-4380 or write Editor & Publisher Yearbook; c/o Editor & Publisher; 11 West 19th Street; New York, NY 10011.
7. **Gale's Directory of Publications.** Published by Gale Research Company, Gale's provides subject information and circulation figures for print media publications across the country. Updated annually. For costs and subscription information, write Gale Research Company; Book Tower; Detroit, MI 48226.
8. **News Media Yellow Book of Washington and New York.** Provides information on reporters, writers, editors and producers in the nation's government and business capitals. For costs and subscription information, call (212) 627 4140 in New York or (202) 347 7757 in Washington, D.C., or write Monitor Publishing Company; 104 Fifth Avenue; New York, NY 10011. Published semiannually.
9. **Cable Spot Advertising Directory.** A regional/national guide to aid in the planning and buying of cable advertising time on local cable systems and interconnects. Updated annually. For costs and subscription information, call (800) 323-6772 or write Reed Reference Publishing; 121 Chanlon Road; New Providence, NJ 07974.
10. **Cable TV Facts.** A concise update on the changing television viewing patterns of Americans. Updated annually. For costs and subscription information, call (212) 751-7770 or write Cable Television Advertising Bureau, Inc.; 757 Third Avenue; New York, NY 10017.
11. **Associated Press Style Book.** (Publisher: AP) Available at your local bookstore.
12. **American Medical Association Manual of Style.** (The medical version of the AP Style Book) (Publisher: Williams & Wilkins) Available at your local bookstore.

13. **Words Into Type.** (Publisher: Prentice Hall) Available at your local bookstore.
14. **National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC).** This is a CDC Office of Public Affairs-sponsored organization of the Public Information Officers for all U.S. state and territorial health departments. They work together to enhance health communications nationwide. Local health departments are encouraged to work with them closely concerning all informational program efforts to public and professional audiences. The public information officer (NPHIC member) at your state health department might be available to help in such areas as news media training, newsletter consultation, news media coverage of an issue, media contact lists, and guidance and development concerning materials for the news media.
15. **National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD).** Similar in structure to NPHIC, NASTAD's focus is strictly AIDS issues.
16. **Community organizations and leaders.** They can be influential with the news media (promoting, delivering, and obtaining good air-times, and tracking usage for PSAs).

Educational

1. **College Media Directory**
Oxbridge Communications, Inc.
150 Fifth Ave., Suite 502
New York, NY 10011
(212) 741-0231
\$75
 - More than 5,500 periodicals (newspapers, yearbooks and magazines) published by students on about 2,500 campuses are listed in this biennial 650-page directory.
 - The directory includes advertising and subscription rates, description of contents, frequency, circulation, method of financing (often supported by the college) and other data, but not the name of the editor or other editorial staff data. News releases generally are not used by college newspapers, except if the release relates to a local event or has a strong student appeal (e.g., contest for students).

2. **CASS Communications, Inc.**

1800 Shannon Place
Evanston, IL 60201
(708) 475-8800

Branch Offices:

6100 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles, CA 90048
Craig Krugman (213) 937-7070

369 Lexington Ave.,
New York, NY 10017
Mark Bosinski (212) 986-6441

- Basically a publisher's representative of high school and college newspapers, CASS also distributes news releases to 5,600 high school and 1,200 college newspapers. If the client provides the release and envelopes, the cost is only 50 cents per school plus postage.
- The National Rate Book and College Newspapers Directory, published by CASS and distributed free to advertisers, provides extensive data about its 1,200 newspapers with a total circulation of over 7 million.

3. **College Marketing Group, Inc.**

187 Ballardvale Street, Suite B-110
P.O. Box 7000
Wilmington, MA 01887-7000
(508) 657-7000

- Offers marketing services to publishers, including mailing lists of college faculty, and other mailing lists and computerized marketing services to colleges and libraries.

4. **National Association of College Broadcasters**

71 George Street, Box 1824
Providence, RI 02912-1824
(401) 863-2225

Media Terms

Assignment Editor (AE): the person who assigns journalists and reporters the stories to cover for the day. Most television and print AEs decide by mid-morning which stories they are going to send their reporters out to cover.

B-Roll: the supporting pictures in a television news package. B-roll is rolling video that plays under the narration track showing persons, locations or events. An example of B-roll might be footage of a speaker during a news conference that a reporter would use in a news segment.

Camera-ready: artwork that is ready to be shot to film for printing.

Media Impressions: depth and range of audience reached through the media. It is an estimation of how many people were reached through print or broadcast. Clip services, such as Burrelle's or Luce, provide information services that track media coverage and provide media impressions. For example, a television "clip" will include the date, time, station, location, program and Nielsen audience estimate. For more information, call Burrelle's at 800-634-1160 or Luce Press Clippings at 800 528-8226.

"Pitching a story": the phrase used to describe contacting a reporter, producer or assignment editor to suggest coverage or news to report. The key to successfully "pitching a story" is to contact the media at the appropriate time and have an "angle" that you think the reporter would be interested in covering.

News Peg: the hard news element of a story that lends the story currency and generates audience interest. An example of a "news peg" might be the release of a national study about condom efficacy.

Sound-bite: a statement from a person that is incorporated into a news story. A sound-bite expresses a complete thought and usually runs for 7-10 seconds.

Wire Service Daybook: The daily roster of events that a wire service maintains to keep reporters and journalists informed about upcoming news and events. Wire services are an excellent way to get media coverage for a story that has broad, national appeal. If a story does get picked up by a wire, such as the Associated Press, both national and local newspapers are more likely to run the story. To get your news, story or event covered by a wire service, contact the "daybook" editor. This is the person in charge of keeping the Daybook.

News Release Checklist

1. Is the lead direct and to the point? Does it contain the most important and interesting aspects of the story?
2. Has the local angle been emphasized?
3. Have who, what, when, where and why been answered in the first few paragraphs?
4. Are sentences short, concise? Paragraphs short? Words common and concrete?
5. Has editorial comment been placed in quotation marks and attributed to the appropriate person?
6. Are quotations natural—that is, do they sound as though they could have been spoken?
7. Has newspaper style (AP or UPI) been followed faithfully throughout the release? If in doubt, contact your state health department public information officer to check your copy.
8. Are spelling and punctuation correct (including names, titles and organizations)?
9. Have all statements of fact been double-checked for accuracy?
10. Has the release been properly prepared, typed and double-spaced?
11. Is the release dated in a prominent place (such as top right-hand corner above the release #)? Is release time indicated?
12. Are names and phone numbers for further information included?
13. Are pages numbered and titled in journalism format? (Correct format enhances media usage.)
14. Is the release properly identified as “Embargoed” or “For Immediate Release?”
15. Does it have a one-line title?
16. Is it labeled with a consecutively assigned number and logged in a notebook that tracks all releases?

Sample News Release

The news release that follows demonstrates one type of story that makes for good releases. You may also find some of the text helpful as you consider what key messages about HIV/AIDS you want to be sure to include in every release.

On agency letterhead:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

(Agency Contact Person)

(Phone Number)

(Your Agency) expands educational programs to help stem growing HIV infection

New Program Targets Illiterate Adults

(YOUR CITY, STATE, DATE) **(Your agency)** announced that it is expanding current educational programs and starting a new service aimed at community residents at risk of HIV infection and AIDS who cannot read. The announcement was made today at a news conference where [your agency] revealed the results of a study that found many area residents who are illiterate are not being reached by ongoing programs.

"HIV infection continues to be a growing problem in **(community)**," said **(your agency)** Executive Director **(name)**. "Based on the findings of this survey, we are going to take an even more aggressive role in the prevention of HIV infection."

The agency conducted the study to measure the reach and effectiveness of its current educational programs. Between January 1 and March 31, the agency contacted 1,000 low-literacy residents, and in personal interviews asked 10 questions to gauge the accuracy of their knowledge about HIV. An 11th question asked if the citizens had participated in any HIV prevention programs.

Only 30 percent of the respondents were aware of **(your agency's)** educational programs; less than 10 percent had participated in the programs. A majority of the respondents (60 percent) were unaware of some of the most basic facts about how HIV is transmitted.

"There's a clear link between lack of accurate knowledge and lack of literacy," according to **(your executive director)**. "For that reason, we're developing communications materials that don't require people to be able to read in order to understand them."

(Your agency) began its HIV prevention efforts in 1985. The services it provides include an AIDS hotline, weekly educational seminars, anonymous HIV counseling and testing, informational materials and individual counseling as needed.

###

Media Advisory

WHAT: **(Your Agency)** announces that it is expanding current educational programs and is starting a new service aimed at community residents who cannot read and who may be at risk of HIV infection and AIDS.

WHERE: **(include location, street address and suite or floor number)**

WHEN: **(include date, day and time of event)**

CONTACT: For more information, contact **(name, organization title and telephone number)**

Media Contact Report

Date: _____

Time: _____

Handled by: _____

.....
(circle one)

Incoming Call

Outgoing Call

Visit: _____

.....
Publication/Station: _____

Circulation/Audience Figures: _____

Editor/Reporter: _____

Secondary Contact: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

.....
Purpose of Call: _____

Response: _____

.....
Comments: _____

.....
ACTION TAKEN

Provided response over phone: _____

Mailed the following information: _____

Faxed the following information: _____

Arranged interview with: _____

Additional follow-up required: _____

Other: _____

Media Tracking Log

Date: _____

Time: _____

Handled by: _____

.....
(circle one)

Publication

Station

Deadline: _____

.....
(circle one)

Editor

Reporter

Incoming call

Outgoing Call

Address: _____

In-person contact: _____

Phone: _____

Request: _____

Response: _____

Comments: _____

.....

Action taken:

Provided response via phone: _____

Mailed Information as follows: _____

Faxed information as follows: _____

Arranged interview with: _____

Additional follow-up required

.....

Date story ran/will run: _____

Requested copy of story (provided videotape/cassette)

Other _____

Checklist for Press Conference Location

Location: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Contact: _____

Possible rooms and seating capacity: _____

Miscellaneous items: _____

.....

Convenience of location

Availability of parking _____

Bad weather alternatives _____

Security availability

Platform/podium

Lighting

Air conditioning/heat

Electrical outlets

Reception area

Mult box

Accessiblilty for disabled individuals: _____

Access to public transportation

Condition/care of grounds (if outdoors) _____

Audio-visual support _____

Room for cameras

Ventilation

Press Conference Checklist (cont.)

- Acoustics/microphones
- Tables, chairs
- Signs

.....
Directions to location

Dates available: _____

Costs: _____

Notes: _____

Preparing for an Interview

1. Be Prepared:

- Just like the Boy Scouts, you must prepare for an interview and know your subject thoroughly. Don't ever think you can "wing" it.
- Think of the worst possible or most inappropriate questions and prepare the best possible answers for them.
- Decide on three or four major points that you want to get across in the interview even if your issues differ from those of the interviewer. Be sure to incorporate these points into early responses to avoid running out of time or, as can easily happen, forgetting one's message.
- Make sure you know about late-breaking news events which could affect your remarks.
- Practice being in front of the camera. If possible, use a video camcorder.
- Interview the interviewer/reporter to find out with whom else they have talked.

2. Be Yourself:

- The most important thing in effective communications is to be yourself.
- Avoid professional acronyms, jargon or fancy, pretentious language. It may confuse people.

3. Be Comfortable and Confident:

- Relax and remember that you know more about the story than the one asking the questions. That is why you are being interviewed.
- Do not jump or react to a story or a question. Don't be combative.
- Take control. Say what you want to say. Remember, you don't have to respond to every question the way the interviewer expects you to respond.

4. Be Honest:

- If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it. Your credibility is crucial. Don't jeopardize it.

5. Be Brief:

- Short and clear answers are the most effective in communicating an idea on television.
- You'll look and sound better if you get right to the point.

6. Use Humor:

- Don't be afraid to use humor. It helps promote a friendly and confident image. But be sure to use at appropriate times and not just out of nervousness.

7. Be Personal:

- Personal stories and anecdotes can help get across an idea or concept. They are also better remembered.

8. Be Positive and Consistent:

- Keep your goals in mind and stick to them. Approach each question in a positive way.

9. Concentrate:

- Give your undivided attention and eye contact to the interviewer. Look directly at the person asking the question.
- Don't be concerned with any distractions created by studio personnel or equipment. Give your undivided attention to the interviewer.
- Listen carefully to the questions asked, and don't be afraid to pause slightly before answering or to ask them to repeat the question.

10. Show Energy:

- Be animated. Use gestures, facial expressions and body language to add vitality to your words. If it feels natural to you, smile.
- Keep your voice conversational but imagine that it has a "face" which can show different emotions and expressions.
- Whatever the forum, lean forward and be alert. Remember that an effective interview is hard physical work.

- Anticipate the easy and tough questions reporters might ask, craft sound-bite responses, and videotape the spokesperson practicing the answers (with gestures) and have a few people critique the practice interview video. Practice again until responses appear professional and comfortable.

11. Show Sincerity and Charm:

- Sincerity is important in any interview, but particularly so when the subject is bad news. Be careful and consider your message.
- Speak convincingly. Use pauses to accent important points.

Interviewing: What to Wear

Colors

- Do not wear anything too dark or too light. The in-between medium shades of grays, blues and browns are the best.
- Very dark clothing, such as black or navy blue, tends to lose detail when viewed on a television screen.
- Although video cameras are now sophisticated enough to handle sharper contrasts, white should be avoided as well.
- No patterns, plaids, florals, checks, stripes or polka dots. All have a tendency to “dance” on camera.

Accessories

- Socks: Be sure your socks match your trousers and cover the calf. Ankle-length socks are not enough. Do not wear white or red socks on camera.
- Shirts and blouses: Use pastel shades, such as light blue, for best effect. Avoid white if at all possible, as television cameras can react to sharp contrasts of color against skin tones.
- Neck-Ties: Again, keep it simple and wear ties which blend with the suit. Avoid “busy” patterns, as they will vibrate on the television screen.
- Jewelry: Do not wear “big” jewelry of any kind. It will distract.
- Pocket Handkerchiefs: Not recommended. They do not look good unless they are absolutely neat, well-pressed and straight.
- Cuff Links/Tie Clasps: Be careful. They can flare or create distortion on screen.

Make-up Tip Sheet

Do you need to wear make-up? The answer is yes, for both men and women. The hot lights will cause you to perspire and bring out any shine on your face. To avoid this, follow the steps below.

Men

1. Because the eye of the camera focuses on a man's beard more than the human eye does, try to shave as closely as possible before going on camera. If you are scheduled to appear later in the day, bring an electric razor.
2. Wash your face with soap and water, then apply an astringent such as Sca Breeze.
3. It's important to have a little powder applied, especially on the nose, forehead and bald spots. The make-up artist will apply this for you. The powder is translucent—do not worry, you will not look “made-up.” The make up washes off easily — most people will not even notice that you are wearing any.

Women

1. Just before appearing on camera, wash your face with soap and water and apply an astringent such as Sca Breeze.
2. You can wear foundation if you like, but more importantly, use lots of powder.
3. Keep your other make-up simple. Avoid make-up that contains glitter or is “frosted.” Rouge or blush is a good idea and mascara looks good, too. Wear lipstick in a flattering shade. Avoid fire-engine red. The director will advise you as to what looks best.
4. If there will be any close-ups of your hands, give yourself a manicure. Nail polish is not necessary, but if you would like to wear it, that is fine. Again, do not choose a shade that is too loud.

Hair

MEN: Do not get a haircut within 2 weeks of appearing on camera. Wear your hair in your usual style, making sure that it stays out of your eyes. Try to avoid hair spray. If you are bald or balding, be sure to have powder applied to those areas to avoid any glare.

WOMEN: Style your hair to keep it away from your face and out of your eyes. Using a hand mirror, try to view yourself in profile. If you cannot clearly see your face, try to restyle your hair so that your face is clearly visible from all angles.