

7th ANNUAL IRIS HOUSE SUMMIT

Women As
The Face
of AIDS



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THE BODY

The Complete HIV/AIDS Resource

Expanding Your Reach

Media Relations and Practice

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What We'll Cover

- Making a media plan for your campaign
 - What do you want to do? Setting goals
 - Who do you want to reach out to? Identifying media outlets and building relationships
 - What do you want to say? Crafting a message, talking points, press releases
- What if *they* want to hear from *you*? Preparing for an interview
- Other ways to respond to media
- Do-it-yourself media: Blogs
- The Internet is forever: A note on privacy
- In closing



Making a Media Plan: Some Things to Remember

- Planning a media strategy is all about how you're going to tell your whole community and the world -- including leaders or others on whom you want to apply some of the pressure in your campaigns -- know about the work you're doing and why it's important. It's an essential step in your work.
- Plan your media strategy alongside whatever event or action you're planning, not at the last minute!
- Your media plan begins with **figuring out what your goals are** and "ends" with **evaluating and reflecting on what you've done**, so you can make changes for the next time around.
- Again, *plan ahead!* This cannot be stressed enough.



Identifying Media Outlets

- Where do you go for **news and information you trust** about what's going on in the world? (A magazine? A newspaper? A community newsletter? A website? A blog?)
- Where do the **community members you want to reach with your campaigns** go for *their* information?
- Are any of these media outlets **already covering HIV-related issues** – or even the issue you work on specifically?



Basics of Building Relationships With Media

- Respect reporter deadlines.
- Be professional.
- Be honest and don't exaggerate.
- Be clear and avoid "insider language" or jargon.
- Be cautious and assume everything is on the record.
- Give them the information they need: relevant research, data, terminology.
- Position yourself as the expert on your issues.
- Refer appropriate spokespeople when appropriate.



When Media Calls: Responding to an Interview Request

When a media professional contacts you for an interview, get these questions answered!

- What is the deadline?
- What is the format for the show? Print, broadcast, online?
- How long will the interview take?
- What is the subject of the interview?
- Who else are you talking to?
- If the interview is live, will there be an audience?
- If the interview is live, will the audience ask questions or will there be a call-in portion?

Before you agree to the interview, do some research to identify:

- The audience
- The tone of previous coverage of your issues
- The style of the journalist



Developing Key Messages

Messages should have two components:

1. TELL A COMPELLING STORY: Engage people emotionally to connect to your audience and find common ground.

2. GIVE YOUR AUDIENCE SOMETHING TO DO: Call upon your audience to examine their perceptions and actions and ask them to change them.



Some Storytelling Terminology

- **Message:** What point or idea are you trying to convey to change hearts and minds in your target audience.
- **Talking Points:** Set of ideas that you want to relate to your target audience through media or conversation with friends, colleagues and family to persuade them to change hearts and minds.
- **Sound bite:** A concise, short, and catchy quote (between 5-15 seconds) when doing interviews or generally talking about the issue.



Talking Points Checklist

- ✓ **PERSONAL STORY:** A resonant, personal anecdote or detail that relates to the broader issue you want to address. Your personal story should be short and relatable, and should speak to how your unique situation and identity makes you the best person to be speaking up about these issues.
- ✓ **AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT:** A call for change that you hope to see and how that connects to core values that we all share. Your affirmative statement should give your audience an opportunity to think about their beliefs and behaviors and why they might want to change them.
- ✓ **SUPPORTING FACTS OR DATA:** Evidence that will support your call for change. Your supporting facts and data should not be a long list of poll numbers, but objective information that will give credibility to your personal story and affirmative statement.



Evaluating Your Talking Points

- *Is it succinct?* 5-10 seconds
- *Is it punchy?* Talking points should be engaging and catchy
- *Does it use jargon?* Avoid technical terms and acronyms
- *Does it clarify an issue?* Use the language of shared values (family, community, equality)
- *Does it cite factual information?* Align your audience with the majority
- *Does it have approval from stakeholders?* Check with the right organization



Preparing for an Interview

- Tailor your talking points to your target audience and the format.
- Prepare responses based on the questions the interviewer will be asking.
- Practice delivering your talking points.
- Get feedback on your talking points and your delivery.



Interview Do's

- **Do** your research and stick to the facts
- **Do** correct misrepresentations and factual errors
- **Do** stick to what you know – the message must match the messenger
- **Do** be for, not just against, something.
- **Do** steer clear of using your opponent's messages
- **Do** anticipate what your opponents might say and be prepared to correct misrepresentations, inaccuracies or false claims
- **Do** focus on the effects your opponents goals would create for your community
- **Do** speak in the language of your audience's values (fairness, justice, commitment and responsibility) and clarify when your opponents are speaking in opposition to those core values



Interview Don'ts

DON'T:

- Say more than you want to
- Go off message
- Exaggerate
- Speculate
- Repeat problematic terminology
- Try to tackle multi-part questions all at once

Remember: Nothing is off the record!



After the Story Runs: Follow Up!

- Give feedback to the reporter after the story runs:
- If it's good, thank the journalist and keep them updated as the issue evolves.
- If it's OK, thank the journalist for what was good and offer them constructive feedback on what wasn't.
- If it's not so good, respond quickly, assertively and respectfully with constructive feedback.
- Keep a record of the story or piece for future reference.



Press Releases and Pitching: Perfect Together

- When you've got an event or there's a relevant news hook coming up, you can translate your talking points into an actual document (no more than one page) to send to members of the media.
- Media outlets -- blogs or websites especially, but sometimes newsletters and even magazines as well -- will post a press release in its entirety, or portions of a press release, rather than write something themselves, so **definitely** write your press release exactly the way you would want to see your story portrayed in the news.
- Spell-check and edit your press release -- ask for a few other sets of eyes on it.
- Email and fax your press release -- send it out several days before your event, and then again 24 hours before your phone pitch. You should both fax and email it if possible.
- Call the media outlet until you get a real person, then deliver a 30-second pitch, or rap, to share the who-what-where-when-why of your event and convince the reporter your event is a hot story they shouldn't pass up.



Other Ways to Respond to Media

- Op-eds
- Letters to the editor
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Guest blog entries -- or starting your own blog



Do-It-Yourself Media: Blogs

- Blogging gives you the opportunity to respond to the issues that are important to you, both out in the world and in your own lives, in the way YOU want to respond.
- It gives everyday people who are not professional writers the opportunity to have a platform to speak and say what is on their minds.
- It brings to light ideas that professional writers and journalists may not even be thinking about in their own work -- especially if the blog concerns populations they normally don't include in their own day-to-day reporting.
- It's a great way to start building virtual community among people who are experiencing what you've experienced, or who believe what you believe.
- It's your own way to make an impact on the world. Blogging isn't just about celebrities and athletes; blogging can be part of being an advocate.



The Internet Is Forever: A Note on Privacy

- Think before you post! Yes, your blog will be searchable on Google. If you blog under your own name, people will find your blog if they search your name!
- A few questions to ask yourself:
 - “Do I feel ready to share any personal information I’ve put in my blog?”
 - “Is this something I would be OK with a potential employer reading? With my children or former partners or parents reading?”
 - “Have I shared information about someone else that *they* might not want someone to know? Have I checked with all the people I know that I’ve mentioned in my blog?”
 - “Have I checked the facts and the spelling in my blog?” – this has less to do with privacy than with how you’re representing yourself and your ideas -- always a good final step before posting a blog entry.



Thank-You's and Further Resources

- **Center for Media Justice – Media How-To's**
<http://centerformediajustice.org/toolbox/media-how-tos/>
- **U.S. Positive Women's Network – Blog Tips and Press Release Tools**
<http://www.pwn-usa.org/tools-and-resources-2/tool-kits-and-presentations>
- **TheBody.com – HIV/AIDS News, Information, Research, Blogs, Support**
Twitter: @thebodydotcom

Thanks so much for listening! ☺

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