

# PREPARING FOR MEDIA INTERVIEWS

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# ITEMS THAT INTERVIEWS CAN PROVIDE

- The latest information
- Clarification
- Context and perspective
- Expert opinion
- Localization
- Human voices
- Personal experience, including anecdotes
- A sense of the process of research
- Further access to written materials and visuals
- Other



# PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS: TIPS FOR REPORTERS

- **Consider whom to interview.**
  - Health professionals
  - Patients
  - Others
- **Do your homework.**
  - Read about the subject.
  - Starting with non-technical sources and then move to more technical ones.
  - Find out about the person being interviewed.



# PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS: TIPS FOR REPORTERS (CONT)

- ◉ Consider what venue would be most suitable.
  - In person? If so, where?
  - By phone (or Skype or such)?
  - By e-mail?
- ◉ Prepare a list of questions,
  - Place them in logical order.
  - Avoid “leading questions”.
  - Don’t hesitate to include “stupid questions”.

# DOING INTERVIEWS: TIPS FOR REPORTERS

- Ask one question at a time.
- Be flexible about the order of questions.
- If some questions are sensitive, put them last.
- LISTEN.
- If you're unsure whether you understood something, have the interviewee check your understanding.
- At the end, ask the health professional or other person whether he or she would like to add anything.



## DOING INTERVIEWS: TIPS FOR REPORTERS (CONT)

- Of course, respect the person's time. For example, consider health professionals' schedules when arranging interviews.
- Thank the person being interviewed.
- Leave open the possibility of following up for clarification etc.
- After the interview, consider what went well and what could be improved in future interviews.
- Other

# PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS: TIPS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

- Find out the background of the interviewer.
- Find out the interviewer's deadline.
- Find out the context . For example:
  - Does the reporter want to write a story about you?
  - Does the reporter want you to comment on some work by someone else?
- Identify written materials (online or other) to provide or recommend. If possible, provide or recommend them in advance.



# PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS: TIPS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (CONT)

- Think of clear, non-technical ways to present the information.
  - Consider how you word things for patients or clients.
  - Perhaps think of analogies.
  - Perhaps think of anecdotes to consider including.
- Think of short, lively ways to present your main messages. In other words, prepare “sound bites”.





# BEING INTERVIEWED: TIPS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

- ⦿ Remember that the reporter is likely to be intelligent but might not know much about your field.
- ⦿ Try to use wording that can be used directly, without “translation”.
- ⦿ If a reporter asks a question that seems irrelevant, try to redirect the interview. (Example: “That’s an interesting question, but actually what this research addressed was whether . . . .”)
- ⦿ Consider checking reporters’ understanding by asking them to repeat points in their own words.

# BEING INTERVIEWED: TIPS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (CONT)

- Offer to be available (for example, by phone or e-mail) if additional questions arise later.
- After the interview, consider what went well and what could be improved in future interviews.
- Consider following up
  - if the story has serious problems
  - if the story is especially good
- Consider contacting the reporter if you later think of possible topics for other stories.
- Other

THANK YOU!

