



American Red Cross

American Red Cross

Media Training

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Preparing for Media Interviews



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- Find out the topic of the story
- What is the reason for the story?
- Determine message you want to convey

Being Quoted



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- Convert your message into sound bites
- Avoid the phrase 'I think'
- Work on 'quotable quote'
- Cliches and humor are good to use

Case Scenario



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You are holding an in-honor-of blood drive for a prominent community member who passed away last year. A press release has been sent to the media and reporters have responded. Your goal for the drive is 100 units. Since it is summer, school is out and many businesses in your community have closed because of the economy. You have television, radio and print representatives interested in an interview. How do you prepare?

Case Scenario 1 - tips



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- Do research on the history of blood drives in your area
- Do research on the community member
- Develop your key messages
- Practice your key messages before conducting interview
- Modify your style for medium

Your Message



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- Focus on three key messages
- State most important message first
- Write the story in your mind
- State your main messages in positive terms
- Message should take no longer than 30 seconds

Your Message (cont.)



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- Don't dodge questions
- Be conversational
- If you are unsure of an answer – don't respond
 - 'I'd be happy to look into that for you'

Television Interviews



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- If there is a camera, assume it is on – ALWAYS
- Do not wear stripes
- People DO judge you on your appearance
- Do not look at the camera, look at the reporter
- Do not lean back in your chair

Television Interviews (cont.)



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- Do not sit up perfectly straight
- Lean forward about 15 degrees into camera
- Don't make any quick, distracting movements
- Smile all the time on camera
- Dress professional – you are representing ARC

Taped TV Interviews



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- Always opt for live interview
- Live formats allow you more control of message
- Make quote interesting – no facts and figures
- If you mess up an answer, stop and start over
- Interview is not over until reporter and camera are gone

Dressing for Television



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- Do not wear white
- Do not wear stripes
- Pastels work well on television
- Do not wear bright reds – they bleed on camera
- Be wrinkle-free

Dressing for Television (cont.)



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- Speak louder than usual, but do not yell
- Wear makeup to avoid looking shiny and oily
- Makeup will prevent you from looking like you are sweating
- If you are bald or balding, powder your head
- Put focus on your face and what you say, not your clothes

Dressing for Television (cont.)



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- Listen to the interviewer
- Do not stand up on the balls of your feet
- Do not sway back on forth
- Do not lock hands together

Dressing for Television (cont.)



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- Do not put your hands in your pockets
- Keep hands in front of you, ready for reinforcing gestures
- Do not swivel in a chair
- Women should not wear short skirts, Men should wear a tie

Print Interviews



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- Regularly read the publications you want to be quoted in
- Facts and figures will not get you quoted
- Have your message or thinking points in front of you
- Sarcasm does NOT work in print
- Print reporters have just as much power as television reporters to help or hurt you – BE PREPARED

Radio Interviews



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- Get all three message points out in first answer
- Opt for an in-studio interview
- Radio audience changes every 15 minutes, be sure to repeat your message constantly

Radio Interviews (cont.)



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- Slow your speaking so listeners can understand
- Be sure to smile while talking
- Do not smack your lips when starting an answer
- Have the number of the studio in case you are cut off

Crisis Communications



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- ‘No comment’ will do more harm than good
- Not talking about a crisis only makes matters worse
- Reporters are doing their jobs – to get the best story
- Be proactive
- Figure out positive message, say it and stick to it

Crisis Communications (cont.)



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- Look and sound calm, pleasant and positive
- Refute incorrect statements in a positive way
- Be friendly to reporters even if they are not friendly

Crisis Communications (cont.)



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- Get all of the bad news out at once – do not give opportunity for a new ‘hook’
- If you are willing to do media interviews, reporters are more likely to trust you

Case Scenario 2



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You have just learned that two hospitals in your area have decided to sever relations with the American Red Cross. Your competition has come forward citing unsafe handling of blood products, high cost and poor customer service as reasons for the switch. All media outlets want a reaction – what do you do?

Be Prepared



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- Media representatives are human
- Present the facts
- Stick to your key messages
- Thank the reporters for allowing you to get your message out
- Follow up with reporters even after story comes out
- Building strong relationships with the media helps your organization in good and bad times

Your Media



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- Building strong relationships with the media helps your organization in good and bad times
- Always be prepared and accessible – your message will be heard



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QUESTIONS?