

HOW TO GIVE AN INTERVIEW

Giving an interview is a great way to personally communicate your message and the message of treatment Foster Care. First and foremost, clarify within your organization who your key media contact will be and what your message is. Do not talk to the media before first getting permission from your CEO and/or Board of Trustees.

Before the Interview

Do your homework. Learn all about the media outlet – how large is their market? What audience will typically view your interview? What is the focus of the show/article/journal? Find out the following specific information from the interviewer:

- ◇ Interviewer's name and phone number (check credentials if not sure)
- ◇ What is the story?
- ◇ When is the story deadline?
- ◇ Can you send them background information?
- ◇ When will the story run?

Take some time to review the key points you want to make and be sure to stick with those themes throughout the interview. If you receive a call for an immediate interview, ask if you can call back to take time to gather your thoughts.

Interview DO's:

- ◇ Do be an advocate – Refer to yourself as a Treatment Foster Care professional to promote and advocate.
- ◇ Do be natural – convey warmth, sincerity, and enthusiasm.
- ◇ Do be clear – speak as if you are communicating to a nine year old child, do not use jargon or say anything that you would not want to see in print (there is no such thing as “off the record”).
- ◇ Do be brief – Use short sentences. Long sentences are more likely to get misquoted.
- ◇ Do be honest – Admit if you don't know the answer to the question and offer to try to get the information. Be sure to follow up!
- ◇ Do be confident – You know more about Treatment Foster Care and your organization than the interviewer does.
- ◇ Do be goal focused – Stay professional and convey your message.
- ◇ Do be sure they have the correct spelling of your name, your title and your agency.

Interview DON'TS:

- ◇ Don't use humor – humor does not translate well and can come off as inappropriate.
- ◇ Don't reinforce the negative – reframe a question instead of repeating back a negative.
- ◇ Don't fill long silences – wait for the interviewer's next question.
- ◇ Don't interrupt – end your statements definitively so the interviewer knows when to speak. Wait for their pause so you know when to answer.

Television Interviews

Using a visual medium like television means that care should be taken around how you will present and be portrayed. Avoid white, deep reds, bold prints, stripes, or colors that are too light or too dark. Err on the conservative side when in doubt about your dress. Also avoid large or distracting accessories such as large jewelry, hats, or sunglasses. Makeup should be natural and accent your features.

During the television interview:

- ◇ Keep good eye contact
- ◇ Use natural facial expression and hand gestures
- ◇ Do not look directly into the camera
- ◇ Assume the camera is always focused on you and that the microphone is always on
- ◇ Ignore distractions elsewhere in the studio
- ◇ Rest hands naturally in your lap and try not to fidget

Radio interviews

In radio interviews, your message relies entirely on what you say and how you say it.

During the interviews:

- ◇ Keep the microphone 1” from your mouth at all times to avoid sudden changes in volume
- ◇ Sit upright to control your voice
- ◇ Stay professional and try not to get “too comfortable”
- ◇ Keep notes in front of you to keep you on track with your message
- ◇ Take pauses instead of fillers (e.g., uh, um, etc.)

Newspaper Interviews

Most newspaper or print interviews are held over the phone. Although you will answer the questions from the interview, you can always follow up with afterthoughts if they are critical to your message. Attempt to lead the conversation to achieve the message you want to communicate. By sticking to your main points, it is easier to stay on track and not get diverted.