

10 Tips for Media Interviews

1. **Assume everything you say is on the record.**
 - a. No matter how comfortable you are with the reporter, it's always better to assume that everything you say could end up on the front page of the New York Times! Don't be scared, be prepared.
 - b. If you are concerned with how the reporter is interpreting your statements or facts, reach out to Walgreens Media Relations.
2. **Try to pivot and answer the question you want to answer, not always the one they ask.**
 - a. Don't wait for the reporter to ask the question you want to answer. Instead, give a short response to the questions then bridge to your message.
 - i. Use a good pivot transition statement like: *Let me just say..., What really matters here is..., What I do know is....*
3. **Avoid Technical Answers**
 - a. Keep it simple. It may seem silly, but general news stories are meant for 4th graders to understand. You would rather reach a large audience than a niche one.
4. **Use Facts**
 - a. Have facts to back up your points and cite sources and studies when applicable. Using facts will make you sound more credible.
 - b. Clarify that you are providing your own opinion when not stating facts. Use a simple phrase such as "*In my opinion...*" to help differentiate.
5. **Tell the Truth**
 - a. If you don't know the answer to a question, it's ok! Instead of trying to make up an answer to seem like you know it, simply say, "*I'm going to have to check on that and get back to you.*" You won't be the first person to say this! Reach out to Walgreens Media Relations for guidance if you do need to follow up.
 - b. If you don't understand the question, keep asking the reporter to clarify until you do. Take as much time as you need to make sure you are understanding correctly.
6. **Don't Repeat a Negative Question.**
 - a. If you don't like a negative questions, give a short answer and pivot to your key message.
7. **Tell Stories to Support the Key Message.**
 - a. It's good to bring in your personal experience when you can. Why are you advocating for this campaign? Why is it important to you? What experiences have you had with the campaign or cause that you think would inspire others?
8. **Don't be a cliché! Avoid answering with "no comment".**
 - a. Try a different response, like "*While I can't comment on that subject, what I can tell you is...*", and pivot back to that key message.
9. **Make Eye Contact. Body Language Counts.**
 - a. Reporters interview people all the time. They can read people well, so make sure your body language reflects the tone you want for the interview.
10. **It's OK if you make a mistake.**
 - a. If you realize you accidentally stated something wrong or something that wasn't true, just correct yourself. Retrace your steps and tell them what you meant to say. Even if it means going back a few questions. You will be happy you did.
 - b. If you realize the error once the interview is over, reach out to Walgreens Media Relations for guidance.

Using a Bridge to Pivot to Key Messaging

Sometimes a reporter does not ask the question we want them to ask. When this occurs, we provide a short answer to the question, and use a bridge phrase to pivot to our key message.

Here are some examples of bridges to use:

- In the mean time
- In this instance
- On the other hand
- Let me just say
- What I can tell you is
- And
- But
- However
- In fact
- Furthermore
- For example
- What must be clear
- In addition

For TV interviews: Every time there is a camera in front of you, assume it is recording.

Stand Up Interview: You and the reporter are standing. Stand up straight and maintain eye contact with the reporter. Do not worry about the camera. Try to relax!

Sit Down Interview: You and the reporter are sitting. Sit on the front portion of the chair, not fully back. Have both feet planted on the floor. The reporter will be seated in front of you. Sit up straight and maintain eye contact with the reporter, do not worry about the camera. Try to relax!

For Radio Interviews: Most radio interviews are done over the phone, but sometimes you will be in studio with the personality. When calling in, be sure to call from a hardline phone whenever possible. Radio interviews are recorded. Assume you are being recorded the moment you answer the phone. Speak clearly at a normal pace where one can easily hear and understand you. No cameras, which means the only way to get the message across is your voice. Make people want to listen! Slow down and try to speak with emotion where possible.

General Tips:

- Avoid forced hand gestures, but natural movements are ok.
- Clothes: Solid colors are best. Avoid loud colors, loud stripes or patterns; they tend not to look good on camera.
- During a live interview, thank the interviewer for having you on at the start and the end.

And remember...you are the message. Let your personality and passion sign through!