

# Preparing for an Interview

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## 1. Develop three to five messages or talking points.

These are the main ideas you want to emphasize and repeat during your interview. Weave these points into all of your answers. Anticipate what questions may be asked and be prepared with the answers. If you are successful at "staying on message" you will be better able to determine the shape of news coverage.

## 2. Learn more about the Interview

Ask what the reporter is looking for. What is the goal of the story? Will this be live or taped?

## 3. Understand the Reporters Timeline

Find out when the reporter must complete the story. Accommodate the reporter's deadline so that they don't rush you during the interview. If a reporter calls you at an inconvenient time, ask to reschedule, but do so knowing they may not call you back

## Interview Tips

- Be enthusiastic
- Avoid acronyms, jargon or technical language
- Maintain eye contact with the reporter
- Keep your answers short (sound bites are generally between 10 to 15 seconds max)
- Stick to 3-5 message points and then STOP TALKING!
- Nothing you say is "off the record"
- NEVER say "no comment"
- Don't repeat negative words or inaccurate facts included in a reporter's question
- Don't worry about repeated questions, If you don't know the answers to a question- say so!
- If the answer is no- it's ok to say no- but be ready to elaborate.
- Never read from notes- use conversational tone
- Use your voice- change your tone to emphasize your biggest points. By using inflection you make key ideas stand out.
- TV interviews are taped- if you don't like how you sound- ask to do it again. However,

Do Not do this multiple times - they will not come back to interview you again.

- Be aware of your posture, sit or stand up straight, do not move back and forth (out of your camera shot) or swivel in a chair- it is the first sign that you are uncomfortable! Talking with your hands is ok. But realize the camera is shooting you from the breasts up- they won't see your hands if you are trying to make a point.
- NEVER look at the camera. Keep eye contact with the reporter. There is no need to talk down to the microphone- it will pick up your voice.
- Be careful about nodding your head- it looks jarring and it also looks like you are agreeing with the reporter.
- Remain upbeat- you need to be 50% more enthusiastic on tv since your normal demeanor (no matter how upbeat) comes across dull on camera. Smile when appropriate and show compassion if needed. TV cameras tend to elaborate facial expressions. A neutral facial expression can often appear like an angry or sad one.
- After the interview- send a reporter a thank you note

## Appearance

- Never wear white
- Avoid elaborate jewelry
- Avoid neon or bright clothing
- Avoid clothing with patterns
- Women, consider wearing more makeup than usual, your makeup will look dull under the bright lights.
- USE POWDER before your interview to avoid looking shiny (even guys that are on TV a lot or want to look more matte wear makeup! You would be SURPRISED how many men "powder their face" before an interview!)