



Tips for Working with the Media

Working with your local media can raise awareness, generate publicity, and ensure coverage of events and outreach for Clinical Hypnosis Day (CHD). When working with the media to promote CHD and Clinical Hypnosis in general, it is essential to establish realistic objectives prior to contacting news outlets and certainly before any communication with reporters. Following are some suggestions for ensuring a productive experience and outcome working with the media (i.e., print, television, radio) to educate the public about CHD and Clinical Hypnosis.

1. **Develop Your Ideas**

Identify essential ideas you want to make, keep your message clear, and concise, and be cognizant of the time you will like have to promote CHD. Most media outlets including television and radio rarely have more than three minutes for either a live or recorded interview. Newspaper and magazine outlets tend to involve more time and permit more expansive interviews with greater flexibility.

Utilize information including in the CHD Toolkit to organize your interview. It may be helpful to provide the media source with some questions that are available in the Q&A paper available in the CHD Toolkit. Most reporters will be appreciative that you have provided them with questions for their interview. Be certain to send questions ahead of time and ensure that the reporter received them and understands them. Ask the reporter if there are other questions they would like to ask you during the interview (especially if it is a live interview) so you are prepared to answer them. This also clarifies that they will be using questions you submitted, if indeed, they have no other questions under consideration.

2. **Think Like an Investigative Reporter**

As you develop ideas to “pitch” to the news media, look for stories that are timely, unique, unexpected, the first of their kind, interesting, inspirational, and/or sensational. Many times, movies may include hypnosis in the storyline and this could serve as an opportunity to schedule an interview and promote hypnosis accurately. At times, hypnosis is inaccurately portrayed in the media as harmful, manipulative, and controlling. Offering opportunities for the media to interview experts trained in clinical hypnosis can be invaluable for promoting accurate information about the many health benefits associated with hypnosis.

3. **Contact the Media**

Obtain a list of contacts (usually managers, but sometimes reporters directly) from local television stations, radio stations, magazines, newspapers, and newsletters. Most media outlets have this information readily available on their websites. It is suggested that your first contact with the media is directly via a

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phone call. Letters and electronic “cold-calls” are rarely returned. Follow-up your initial phone contact with a letter and an attachment that includes a brief bio regarding your credentials and expertise with hypnosis. Contact your local news outlets at least one month before CHD so that they are able to either provide an interview ahead of time or schedule time for “live” interview on May 23rd. Be receptive and flexible to appropriate counter-suggestions from news media representatives.

News outlets are not generally annoyed by multiple contacts from “professionals/experts” for interviews. They are very busy people who respond to the changes in the world and in their communities that sometimes occur overnight. If you do not receive a response or invitation in a reasonable period of time, make additional efforts.

4. Interviews with the Media

Print media offers benefits and challenges that should be considered. One benefit is print media provides opportunities for you to change an answer or wording after responding to a question. At times there is more “give-and-take” during an interview for print media. Unfortunately, once the article is in print, regardless of the accuracy of a report, it’s in print and cannot be directly modified. Most print media reporters will not permit a review of the article before it goes to press, though some do, and it could be advantageous to ask about this to ensure the accuracy of quotes that are attributable to you. Always ask the reporter, “Will I be able to review the article before it goes to press?”

Television/Radio Media typically prefer “live” interviews given their time constraints. Television media, however, is generally receptive to recorded interview if the topic of interest is timely. Usually associate reporters will accommodate your schedule and arrive at your office to conduct an interview.

5. Invite the Media

Work with institutional and local officials to invite the media to attend any activities during which CHD events will be recognized by the general public. The officials likely will welcome the opportunity to receive some positive public attention and the media will likely be motivated to cover a report about clinical hypnosis.

6. In Conclusion

Most reporters are respectful of health and mental health experts. After all, they are receiving newsworthy information free of charge from a volunteer that is willing to be interviewed. They also understand this is a mutual relationship and if they appreciate the information you have to offer that may otherwise be challenging to obtain, they do not want to upset you. Dissemination of factual information about clinical hypnosis through media outlets could be invaluable for

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the work we do and promote. Not everyone is comfortable being in front of a camera or having their voice projected across airwaves. For some, live television interviews will work well, for other providing answers to questions that appear in print will suffice. It is, therefore, important to know your strengths and limitations before engaging with the media.