

# HANDLING THE MEDIA

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## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN TODAY

- What to do when you're contacted by a member of the media
- How to prepare for an interview
- Media lingo
- How to do an interview with the press

# CURRENT NEWS ENVIRONMENT

## Deceptive marketing by crisis pregnancy centers prompts bills, consumer alert

BY: DANA DIFILIPPO - JANUARY 17, 2023 6:53 AM



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NEW JERSEY

## New Jersey aims to be a safe haven for abortion. Crisis pregnancy centers stand in the way, leaders say

Critics say the centers rely on deception, while supporters say they offer a wealth of services for women.

Identity

### Crisis Pregnancy Centers Like Problem Pregnancy Disguise Anti-Abortion Stance With Pro-Choice Messaging

A Problem Pregnancy crisis center sits across the street from a Planned Parenthood in Worcester, Massachusetts. They are not the same.

## Why Won't the CDC Kick "Crisis Pregnancy Centers" Out of Its Directories?

MAY 16, 2023, 9:00AM | GARNET HENDERSON

If you're looking for an STI test and visit [gettested.cdc.gov](https://gettested.cdc.gov), you might accidentally end up at a CP

## Democrats eye a new approach to rein in crisis pregnancy centers

Despite facing a tough legal landscape, blue states remain hopeful they can take on the controversial centers with a more incremental legislative approach.

ABORTION · Published October 20, 2022 2:00am EDT

## More than 100 pro-life orgs, churches attacked since Dobbs leak

DOJ has yet to announce any arrests in attacks on pro-life centers

LAW / NEWS

## 'Jane's Revenge' Claims Another Pregnancy Center Victim

Mary Margaret Olohan / @MaryMargOlohan / Elizabeth Troutman / @ElizTroutman / March 07, 2023

# THE NEWS DESK VIEW

- News is all about **controversy**
- Story must be **legit, timely** and **compelling**
- Reporters **aren't our friends** – they have their own motives and ambitions
- Reporters always want a “**human face**” to their stories
- Editors want stories that have an **impact** on society
- Reporters really want and need **accessibility**
- Reporters have **egos** – they want to be read, tweeted, watched, FB'd
- Press begets **press**
- There is an **absolute bias** in media today

## WHAT TO DO WHEN CONTACTED FOR AN INTERVIEW

- Get the name of the reporter, outlet, deadline, and contact info.
- Let your staff know not to do interviews if a reporter calls. Refer to step 1.
- Contact me – Kristina, [media@nifla.org](mailto:media@nifla.org) or 908-902-8473 – and I'll help you vet the reporter and talk through options.
- I can also help with messaging point and interview parameters.

# INTERVIEW LINGO & PARAMETERS

- **Off the record:** whatever you say during the interview cannot be quoted and attributed to you or attributed anonymously
- **On the record:** whatever you say can be quoted and attributed to you
- **On background:** whatever you say cannot be attributed by you but can be quoted as an “anonymous source”

## MEDIA RESPONSE OPTIONS

- You can do the interview on the record with no parameters and however the reporter wants.
- You can do the interview with set parameters.
- You can decline the interview and say “no comment at this time.”
- You can ignore the reporter and never respond to inquiries.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR TALKING THE PRESS

- Will being in this story help women to come to our pregnancy center?
- Will being in this story give us more exposure for donors?
- Will being in this story put us in a negative light?
- Will the negative media coverage outweigh the benefits of possibly someone seeing the story and coming into our center for help or someone donating?
- What does my board want me to do?
- Will our center's safety be comprised by us being in this story?



# EXAMPLE OF A HOSTILE MEDIA EMAIL

**Subject:** media request - the guardian

Hello, I am a reporter with the Guardian covering a study to be published tomorrow (June 15) by the Center for Countering Digital Hate that mentions your company. In particular, the study claims that your company and others have enabled hundreds of "crisis pregnancy centers" to create marketing campaigns and websites that target people seeking abortions.

Specifically, researchers say that "exploitive marketing companies provide services to further undermine sexual reproductive rights in America" - do you have response to that allegation?

Do companies you work with seek to dissuade people from obtaining abortions?

Do you have any general comment for the story?

My deadline is 11 pm EST today (6/14) but given the short notice we would be happy to update the story after publication if you do have a comment to provide.

# INTERVIEW BASICS

# BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Goal: **inject two or three key message** points into the interview answers
- Understand the **story angle** and the interviewer's background
- Take into account **current events** in all of the areas that affect your organization
- **Read** past articles written by the reporter



## DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Structure answers with the key point first, followed by supporting information
- Treat each answer as the entire interview
- Be quotable; be concise
- On phone calls or radio, use a cheat sheet that has your message points in front of you and a Q&A if necessary

# TAKE CONTROL

- Know what you want to accomplish in each interview – key messages, reporter education, etc.
- No matter the question, always find a way back to your key point
- Bridging: provide a quick answer and then move to your messages

# BRIDGING PHRASES

- What's most important is...
- The real issue is...
- That not how I could characterize the issue, to me, the issue centers on...
- Let me just add that...
- That's an important point because...
- What that means is...
- Another item to remember is...
- If you look closely at this issue, you'll find...
- I don't know. What I do know is...

# WHEN FACING TOUGH QUESTIONS

- Don't say "no comment"
- Don't repeat the negative
- Don't get upset (visibly)
- Don't engage in an argument; have a discussion and speak with authority
- Keep answers short – once you made your point, you don't have to keep talking. Reporters have used awkward silences to get good stories because their subjects feel the need to fill the silence.
- If the interviewer is contentious, simply refer them to a prior statement or write a concise statement that has the talking points you want to get across, they will be forced to include them in their story. You do not have an obligation to answer their questions, your obligation is to protect your organization and put it in the most positive light.

## WHAT NOT TO DO

- Don't speculate, conjecture or answer hypothetical questions
- Avoid using acronyms, jargon, or technical terms
- Never deceive a reporter



# TELEVISION INTERVIEWS


- If you are not in a studio with the interviewer and you are in a remote location at a local bureau or at home on your computer, turn off any monitors in the room you are in and look directly into the camera. Don't bounce in your chair.
- If you are interviewed by a reporter, always look and talk directly to them, not the camera.
- Speak in sound bites.
- Repeat your main points as often as you can in pre-taped interviews.



# LIVE RADIO INTERVIEWS

- More opportunity to engage in a thoughtful dialogue
- Opportunity to promote website
- Restate main points periodically for dial surfers
- Bridge away from controversial or random questions (especially during listener call-ins)





WHAT  
RIGHTS DO  
I HAVE AS  
THE  
SUBJECT OF  
AN  
INTERVIEW?

- To know who is interviewing you and the publication the reporter represents
- To know in advance the subject of the interview (but not the questions)
- To have others present during the interview
- To video or tape record an interview
- To get an assessment of the reporter's understanding of your organization
- To stress positive information/withhold negative or proprietary information



WHAT  
RIGHTS DO  
I HAVE AS  
THE  
SUBJECT OF  
AN  
INTERVIEW?  
(CONT'D)

- To use notes, press materials and other informational resources
- To challenge, question facts, premises and assumptions
- To provide additional information at a later time
- To end the interview after a reasonable time
- To know the other interview subjects for the story
- You don't have to do the interview. You can turn it down.

WHAT RIGHTS  
DON'T I HAVE AS  
THE SUBJECT OF  
AN INTERVIEW?

- To know specific questions in advance
- To approve your quotes
- To review the article before publication
- To ask for another reporter to do the story
- To deceive the media
- To approve a photos of you, if one is taken
- To retract statements you made during the interview
- To decide, after the fact, that all or part of the interview was “off the record”

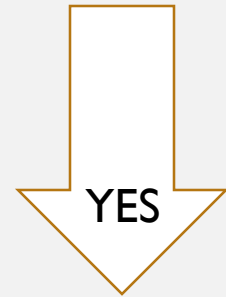
## WHAT TO WEAR AND WHAT NOT TO WEAR

- No tight patterns on jackets, ties or shirts -tight stripes, herringbone, plaids, etc.They can cause a “moire” pattern which will make clothes appear to shimmer.
- Wear blues, off-white and pastel shades, light grey or blue blazers.Avoid black or white and heavy contrast or clashing colors.
- Women should wear a jacket or blouse with a lapel or collar (it’s easier to clip the microphone).
- Glasses can reflect T lights – consider anti-reflective lenses, contacts or taking them off.

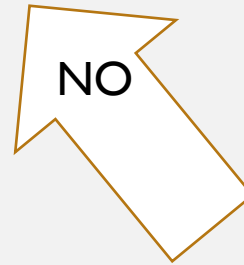


Pinstripes, herringbone,  
or Scottish tweed

Just...no



Fabrics that  
make noise  
when they  
move, or are  
pressed  
against a  
microphone



## ONCE IN THE “HOT SEAT”

- Try to relax. If you know your material, you'll be fine.
- When in a studio, for a live or taped show, be sure to pay attention at all times because the tape may be rolling and you won't know it.
- If told to address the camera, find a spot in the camera lens and keep your eye contact there. Do not wander – it is really distracting to the viewer, giving the impression you are losing eye contact.
- You never know when the camera will be “on.” Don't count on a red light. Many remote studios don't use them so assume you are always on.
- If you are using an earpiece (you should do this on Zoom interviews), make sure it fits comfortably and the volume is correct. The tech can adjust it for you.



LET'S PRACTICE!