



How To Prepare for a Print Interview
Prepared by the EAST Advocacy and Outreach Ad Hoc Committee

Simply put, many people think print interviews are the best. These are great opportunities to fully explore a topic. Because they are not constrained by sound bites or abbreviated descriptions, print reporters can typically go into greater depth in their stories. For example with a topic like heart disease, they can go into the incidence of the disease, describe the warning signs of the condition, address available treatments and talk about promising research. To fully take advantage of these golden opportunities, it is important that you do your homework. If you have particular statistics you would like to share, provide links to webpages verifying that information. If you know someone else the reporter should talk to on that particular subject, don't hesitate to share that information. Both you and the reporter share a common interest in making sure the story is accurate.

Tips for a successful print interview:

- 1) Think before you speak - Some reporters have a disarming nature about them and it is easy to let your guard down. But, don't do it. Everything you say is on the record and could wind up the story. For example, the reporter could use an off color joke or expression to paint you in an unfavorable light.
- 2) Don't ask to see the story - Asking to see one their stories is an affront to their editorial integrity. Instead, use your educator hat to explain the topic in easy to understand terms. You might even ask a question or two along the way to see if he or she is following you.
- 3) Make yourself available for follow up - Reporters won't let you see their stories but they may have unanswered questions when they start to write. Make sure they have a phone number where they can call you or an email where they shoot a question.
- 4) Prepare ahead of time - Reporters will typically let you know what they are going to be talking about ahead of time. Take the opportunity to look up pertinent information before the conversation.
- 5) Speak slowly – Many reporters do not know shorthand and write slowly. Speak slowly so the reporter can write all the important information down. Keep your answers concise and complete sentences. Remember that your answers are quotes, refrain from using words such as, “you know”, “like”, “um”, because they will be printed in the story.
- 6) Do not repeat a negative statement - Avoid the question altogether or rephrase it. This is a common trap.
- 7) Don't sweat the small stuff - Reporters are human and will make mistakes. Nothing kills a budding relationship with a reporter than a request for a correction. If it's a wrong number or Web address by all means bring it up to the reporter. If it's a minor statistical error or description it may be best to let it go.