FURTHER ADVICE ON SENSITIVE ISSUES


▷ Communicating Risk in a Soundbite
▷ Peer Review in a Nutshell
▷ When Animal Research Hits the Headlines
▷ Communicating Uncertainty in a Soundbite

NOTES

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN A REPORTER PHONES

- Who am I speaking to?
- What is your article for – the media outlet and any specific program or section?
- What is the subject and are you focusing on any particular aspect?
- How much time do you need?
- Have you spoken with anyone else?
- What is your deadline?

BEFORE CALLING BACK

- Determine what kind of reporter you’re dealing with and therefore what depth of information you are most likely to need.
- Double-check any factual information and have it handy.
- Decide the key point you want to get across.
- Think up striking analogies/metaphors for the research that relate to everyday life.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Remember you are talking to a reporter because you believe in helping to improve public understanding.
- While you are explaining things try to make sure the reporter is keeping up.
- Avoid jargon as much as possible and spell out any technical terms or words.
- Provide your contact information, including after hours, so the reporter can reach you for a last-minute fact-checking.
- Offer to send background articles and links for possible graphic illustrations.

QUESTIONS WHEN THE CALLER IS A BROADCAST PRODUCER

- Is this radio or TV?
- Live or recorded?
- Are you focusing on any particular aspect of the subject?
- Who is the interviewer?
- Are there other guests?
- How much time do you need? How long a story are you doing? Is it a “feature” or news story?
- Where do you want to film me – in a studio, my lab or other location?
- Will you want to film my lab in operation, while an experiment is taking place?
- Will you want to interview other members of my team (including the grad students)?
- Will you edit the interview or run it in its entirety?

AND BEAR IN MIND …

- For a five-minute feature piece you can spend the whole day with the crew – and sometimes two days. Can you spare the time? Will the department head support you?
- Recognize this as a teaching opportunity for your grad students and get them involved. Having a few as part of the story can be good – not more than three or four.
- Do you have any research video or animation or stills that might illustrate your research? (but make sure you have the rights to any video i.e. who shot it...and who is in it.)
- Ask for a copy of the piece that aired as a courtesy for your time. Can you run it with credit on your website, or link to their website?