

Media Interview DO's and DON'Ts

Influencing key decision-makers through the media they follow is a great campaign strategy. As important as body confidence is, you may not get a ton of opportunities to be interviewed by the press, so you will want to make the most of any interview opportunity.

DO's:

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

- DO preview the questions the reporter gives you.
- DO ask how much time the reporter has.
- DO carefully prepare talking points or sound bites that you want to be sure to include during the interview. Imagine the headline you would like and craft your talking points to match it.
- DO tell the reporter that you are nervous if you are before you get started. This may signal them to coach you through the experience a bit.
- DO use props that connect to the legislation, such as social media targeting young people with weight-loss supplements (be sure to conceal any brand or product names) or photoshopped images that contribute to poor body image and unhealthy behaviors.
- DO plan your background and clothing if you will be interviewed on camera remotely rather than in a TV studio. Try to avoid having family members, co-workers, or pets behind you, and ensure your background reflects how you want to be seen as a spokesperson. Test out lighting and audio prior to the interview; often poor-quality audio or visual is edited out of news segments. For best lighting, ensure that the light is in front of you, but placed behind the camera. Make sure to keep your notes close to the camera so you are able to keep your face and eyes up. And remember to look at the camera, not the screen, so that you appear to be making eye contact with the audience. For best sound quality, make sure you are on Wi-Fi, that you are in a room without background noise or echo, and that you are sitting within two feet of your computer or webcam microphone.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- DO be yourself! Be likable and engaging. SMILE.
- DO share your personal reason for caring about this legislation.
- DO keep answers short and simple, and avoid jargon, acronyms or technical terms.
- DO stick to your talking points, go back to your sound bites if things get off track.
- DO say "I don't know" when you do not -- but offer to get back to them with more information when you are able, in a timely manner.
- DO be positive, remain cool and behave as if the camera is always on.

DON'Ts:

- DON'T speak "off the cuff." If a reporter calls unexpectedly, say "I am in the middle of something, but if you tell me a little bit about what you'd like to discuss and what your deadline is, I can call you back." Then hang up, prepare your talking points, and return the call.
- DON'T guess at an answer, or say "no comment" – you can avoid saying "no comment" by responding to a question you don't want to answer with one of your sound bites.
- DON'T say something negative about a lawmaker. For example, telling a reporter that a lawmaker is in the pocket of the diet industry is not going to help your case – even if it does make for a spicy headline. Play the long game because you will likely need their support again.

- DON'T wear all black or all white, or clothes with small patterns, or logos for products not associated with the interview if you are going to be filmed because they do not show well on camera.
- DON'T become angry or provoked, use swear words, or other inappropriate language.
- DON'T speak off the record, ever! (There is no agreed-upon definition for "off the record," so it is smarter to avoid it to be safe.)