

# Tips for Attracting Publicity

**Media Messages:** When we publicize our activities, we always plan *media messages*. For any activity we organize, we clarify for ourselves the three main points we are trying to convey. We make sure all members of the group understand and communicate the same messages and that all materials going to the media support the messages. In preparation for speaking with the media, our spokespeople will rework the media messages into *media soundbites*, which are seven to fifteen second encapsulations of the story as we want it told. Being creative with soundbites will increase your chances of getting media coverage: use humor, metaphors or irony. Remember that soundbites should sound spontaneous even if you've practiced them twenty times!

**Press Kits:** We find that journalists and reporters always ask for general statistics on domestic violence whenever we work on a story with them. For this reason, we prepare a press kit, which contains statistics on domestic violence, a copy of the press release we wrote for the event and a list of speakers identifying all the spokespeople by name and title or affiliation. All these items are printed on agency letterhead and compiled in a folder for each press representative. We always designate a media coordinator who connects with all press as they arrive, gives them their press packet and directs them to the appropriate spokespeople as needed.

**Flyers:** A colorful, clearly written flyer is a great way to invite people to attend your activity. In our flyers, we use a "who, what, where, when and why" format, providing this information in clear, concise sentences. The less text the better, because most folks don't spend a lot of time reading flyers. We usually mail flyers to our agency volunteer mailing list and fax them to organizations we think would be interested. We often include our flyers in our agency newsletter and occasionally in the mailings of organizations who support our work.

**Phone trees:** We have found that phone calls make a huge difference in getting people to come out to our activities. We divide our agency volunteer phone lists and phone lists we have gathered at previous activities and make ten to thirty phone calls each. It's a lot of work but the personal connection works wonders and the increased turnout is worth it.

**Newspaper listings:** An easy way to notify the community about your activity is to place a listing in the calendar section of your local newspaper. Most newspapers accept two-to-three line blurbs about community events.



Adapted from *How to Facilitate Community Action Teams*. © 2000, Marin Abused Women's Services.

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