



Working with the Media: the following guidance has been adapted from Church World Service's media training to prepare staff who work with media, messaging, and advocacy.

Types of Interviews

- Background
- Editorial
- News
- Features and investigative stories
- Broadcast – radio or TV

Before the Interview

- Research the reporter and publication
- Gather as much information as you can about the purpose and topic of the interview
- Consider your audience
- Think about and make note of your key messages
- Gather your materials
- Identify your verbal ticks in order to manage them

Know Your Message

- This is a good exercise to practice with staff who will be dealing with the press: choose a partner and together come up with 2 sentences to describe:
 1. The mission of your shelter
 2. How this mission informs the work that you do

Messaging: Countering fear-based misinformation on refugees and migrants

- Focus on core values: family, faith, diversity, generosity, and human rights
- Highlight your community of supporters

Storytelling for Impact

- First person narratives humanize the vulnerable
- Carefully select your stories
- Emphasize similarities with the audience to make the asylum-seeker families, and their choices, relatable
- Focus on the positive
 - Avoid detailed accounts that will scare people
 - Share their future hopes and dreams - immigrants are the definition of the American Dream
- Consider highlighting volunteers as well as clients
- Considering highlighting the motivations of why volunteers and staff are working at the shelter

Prepare Your Call to Action

- What can supporters do to help your shelter?
- What can supporters do to help families after they've left your shelter?
- Consider advocacy-related asks



During the Interview

- Focus on your key messages
- Be brief, answer one question at a time
- Provide details –assume the reporter knows very little about what is happening on the ground
- Avoid acronyms and try to use everyday language, limit legalese to only when asked to explain it
- Stay on topic
- Speak slowly
- Take advantage of open-ended questions
- Remember, nothing is off the record
- Be positive
- Be honest, be confident, be yourself
- Remember, you are the expert!

How to be Quotable

- Use compelling data and statistics when possible
- Have anecdotal examples you can draw from
- Don't be afraid to use powerful language when speaking about asylum seekers
- Be emotive
- Make historical and other comparisons when appropriate ex: largest crisis since World War II

Bridging

This is a technique you can employ when you need to pivot or reframe a question or answer, example phrases include:

- "That's a great perspective, it makes me think about..."
- "Before we get off that topic, let me just add..."
- "Let me put that in perspective."
- "It's important to remember that..."

When Things Go Wrong

- Remain friendly and assume the reporter has good intentions
- Be familiar with the opposition's argument
- Anticipate adversarial questions
- Practice bridging (a technique you can employ when you need to pivot or reframe a question or answer; see the bridging section above)
- Don't try to come up with an answer you don't have. Instead, offer to refer them to someone else or offer to conduct more research and contact them at a later date.

Dispelling Common Misconceptions

Don't assume that the reporter or the audience fully understands the issue! For example, what makes someone a refugee? This UNHCR resource answers many of the questions you may encounter regarding terminology: *'Refugees' and 'Migrants' - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)* is available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/56e81c0d4.html>.

- Familiarize yourself with the difference between:



- Migrant vs. asylum-seeker
- Immigrant vs. refugee

Sharing Client Stories

Keep the following in mind when sharing client stories:

- Sharing compelling stories of why guests came to U.S., challenges in the asylum process, what the United States means to them.
- Obtaining informed written consent if a guest chooses to be interviewed
- English is always a plus, particularly for broadcast
- Client confidentiality: some outlets have different levels of confidentiality they can provide to ensure client safety
- Ensure that the client has been fully vetted for interviews

After the Interview

- Ask when the article/story will run
- Send a thank you with any relevant materials
- Follow reporters on Twitter
- Share the stories with your networks

Broadcast: On Camera

- Practice - Attempt to obtain the questions, or at least a good idea of the topic before the interview. Practice how you will answer expected questions. You can practice by recording yourself on your computer or with a colleague. It's good to have feedback or be able to play back the practice session and watch yourself.
- Presentation - Wear something that is comfortable and smart. Ideally a dark jacket, light colored or lightly patterned top. Sit up straight and cross your legs at the ankles rather than the knees.
- Watch your body language - Especially before an on-camera interview, make sure to relax your body. During the interview, sit up straight and keep your eyes on the interviewer. Moderate hand gestures are welcomed and help you to appear less stiff.
- Speaking on camera - Take a nice deep breath before you speak. Your breathing and speaking rate should be steady and calm so you have time to think about what you are saying. Try not to interrupt the presenter or other guests. Stay still and try not to move your head too suddenly.

Broadcast: Radio

- Help Your Host - Short answers allow the host to ask another question, take another phone call, or throw to commercial – so keep your answers to 30 seconds or less.
- Express Passion - Listeners will “hear it” if you stand, use well-timed gestures, and smile – so get a telephone headset and gesture away. Try to match or slightly exceed the host’s energy level to avoid sounding flat.
- Don’t Depend on Them to Make the Plug - Although most experienced hosts are adept at sending their listeners to your toll-free phone number or company website, some aren’t. That means it’s up to you to mention that information a couple of times throughout the interview.



- High Drop-in, Drop-Out Rates - Many people who are listening at the beginning of your segment aren't going to be there at the end. Other listeners will join in the middle. Therefore, repeat your main messages – or themes – numerous times during the interview. You shouldn't use the same words, so find different ways of articulating the same main points.