
The CHADD Media Tool Kit

Overview

Media relations is an important function for anyone who hopes to effect change. This is particularly true for chapter coordinators, because you work every day to make a difference for people living with AD/HD. *The CHADD Media Tool Kit* was developed to help you in all of your media outreach, providing details on how to reach television, radio, newspaper and Internet journalists with your message(s). You may read the contents sequentially or move directly to the information you need. However you use it, we hope you'll find it useful in all your media endeavors.

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Working with Reporters

The best way to begin an effective media program is to read your daily newspaper, watch the local TV newscasts and listen to local radio to identify the programs and reporters covering mental health and education issues. By doing your research, you'll be able to identify specific reporters and their biases and favorite topics. If you're dealing with a print reporter, review the newspaper online; search by the reporter's name (byline) and review his/her past articles. Once you've learned who you want to work with, you're ready to reach out. Here are some techniques used to open the door to good working relationships with the media.

Contacting a reporter to suggest a story idea is referred to as ***pitching a story***; before you begin the process, be sure to have all your information and resources in place. [See Page 6.4 for more information on story ideas]. You may ask to schedule a meeting, referred to as a ***deskside briefing***, with reporters or editorial boards. ***Desksides*** are a good way to educate journalists about a given issue and while they don't always result immediately in a story, reporters will have a better understanding of AD/HD the next time the topic is covered.

While one-on-one discussions can be effective, sometimes you'll need to develop written materials, such as ***press releases, media advisories, opinion/editorials*** and ***letters to the editor***. [See Page 6.5 for more details]. ***Press releases*** and ***media advisories*** are useful tools for alerting the media to upcoming events, such as your regular or annual meeting. Remember, however, that there is competition between media outlets, so you will want to have something unique for each reporter. ***Opinion/Editorials*** (called ***Op/Eds***, in media short hand) are rather hard to get published, but are quite effective when they run. And a ***letter to the editor*** is another effective media technique in responding to articles or information recently published or broadcast.

When you've established yourself as a credible source of information about AD/HD with the local media, you may receive calls asking you to comment or be interviewed, for print or broadcast, on a relevant story or topic. This is referred to as an ***on the record comment***. Remember: Every word you say can be printed or broadcast. Be sure to use your words judiciously! [See Page 6.6 for more information on interviews.]

Regardless of how you decide to approach the media, your goal is to come across as cordial, cooperative and knowledgeable. If you have questions, please contact the CHADD Communications and Media Relations Department [See page 6.7 for contact information].

The Elements of a Good Story

As the old saying goes, you never have a second chance to make a good first impression. One of the best ways to make a favorable impression on journalists is to be prepared when you approach them. That means you should have a story idea that will likely be approved by the reporter's editor or producer. Editors and producers typically define "news" as a story that includes one of the following elements:

Timeliness. Media outlets compete fiercely to be the first to disseminate a story. Your success may be based on whether you can help the journalist you are working with meet his/her deadlines and be the first to deliver a story to the public.

Novelty. New and unusual topics or angles attract readers. Don't pitch the same stories that typically run about AD/HD (Think "Back to School"). Think of angles that haven't been so thoroughly explored ("A Teacher's View of AD/HD in the Classroom"), and you are sure to catch a reporter's eye!

Controversy. It's unfortunate, but conflict sells. Those of us working on mental health issues know that controversy is not in short supply. While you may find yourself working on a controversial story, you should always help reporters focus on the science. **It is also always a good idea to let the Communications and Media Relations Department at CHADD [See contact information on Page 6.7] know when you are working on stories with this sometime necessary but always volatile news element.**

Proximity. It's a sad fact, but an earthquake halfway around the world can garner less news coverage in your local newspaper than a car accident down the street from your house. People want to know what is happening in their own backyard. Make sure your story ideas focus on local issues.

Emotional Appeal or Human Interest. The public, and thus the news media, enjoy stories that involve human emotion and pull at the heartstrings. You'll probably get a more positive response from the media if you relate the facts through personal stories from parents and children with the disorder

Possible Story Ideas:

- Impact of untreated AD/HD.
- Senior citizens with AD/HD.
- AD/HD in Your State/Area (e.g., public policy initiatives designed to protect or hinder the rights of those with AD/HD).
- Parents who learned about their own disorder once their children were diagnosed.

Your Press Materials

The **press release** is one of the most common ways to communicate your story to the media. Press releases are typically one to two pages in length. The first paragraph or lead provides the "who, what, when where and why" of an event or newsworthy item. [See samples on Page 8.] The format is a fairly rigid one, set by convention and tradition, and must include the elements listed below. The easiest way to organize this initial information is to follow the sample included in the Kit.

A Press Release should include:

- A Headline
- Contact Information (must appear before the story begins)
- Your city's name and a hyphen (Ex: WASHINGTON) at the beginning of the first sentence of the story
- An Opening Paragraph with the who, what, when where, why and how
- Quotes from the coordinator, a parent, an expert, teacher, etc.
- Marks indicating the story has ended (either -31- or ###) at the bottom of the document.

A **media advisory** or **media alert** briefly explains a program or event in a quick easy-to-read format. These are always one-page long and single-spaced. Photo and interview opportunities also should be noted on the advisory. [See sample on Page 6.11]

Media Advisories Should Include:

- When your event will take place. [Be sure to include both date and time.]
- Where your event will take place.
- Why the event is important and will benefit the public.
- How people can learn more or register (if appropriate).

As previously mentioned, a **letter to the editor** or **Op/Ed** essay can be used to communicate your message, particularly if you want to respond to an article or column in your local newspaper or address a state or local issue. If you decide to submit a letter to the editor, you will want to keep the letter **VERY BRIEF**; one or two very short paragraphs will be ideal. Every media outlet has guidelines about when and how they will accept these materials – if you fail to follow the rules, your letter or essay may be discarded without being read. Op/Eds, on the other hand, can be about 500-600 words and can examine an issue thoroughly. [See "Samples" Section for an example.]

Once you have developed your materials, you can e-mail them to local reporters. Typically, reporter e-mail addresses are made available by state press associations for a nominal fee. The yellow pages of your local phonebook can also be a helpful resource. Simply look under "Television" and "Newspapers."

The Elements of a Good Interview

If your pitch has interested a reporter, you'll most likely get a call asking you to provide more information or answer some questions. The key to feeling comfortable and doing well in an interview is knowing what you want to say and saying it clearly. Most interviews are brief, so you must deliver your messages quickly, clearly and often. Many times, especially in radio or TV interviews, only one quote or "sound bite" is used in the final piece, so you have to make every word count.

To prepare for an interview, craft three message points that clearly communicate the information you want to leave with your audience. Use quotable language, speak in short sentences, and include statistics and real-world examples to paint a compelling picture. (For instance, don't say a child with AD/HD may be hyperactive. Say she may not be able to sit still, cannot finish a 5 minute quiz, repeatedly gets out of her seat and moves around the classroom. Try to paint a picture with your words.)

When conducting an interview, reporters often already know the angle their story will take. They are looking to you to support or challenge their angle. The best answer to a question comes from listening carefully to the question. Do your best to respond to the question, but always try to **bridge** to your message points. A **bridge** enables you to change the subject back to your agenda, allowing you to maintain control of the interview and deliver the points you want.

Quick Tips in Interview Etiquette

Your credibility depends on how you present your knowledge to the interviewer and audience. Here are more tips for a successful interview:

- **Set ground rules.** Before the interview, establish the time, date, place, length and subject(s) to be covered. Knowing what to expect will help you prepare.
- **Be personable and engaging.** Call the interviewer by name, make small talk before and after the interview.
- **Remember that nothing is off the record.** Make small talk, but don't ever assume that the interview is over.
- **Eliminate distractions.** Close your door, hold all telephone calls, and don't allow interruptions.

If the reporter has a negative perception or agenda, the questions you're asked will reflect this point of view. Rather than answer controversial questions, when your responses might be misconstrued or might place you or CHADD in an unfavorable light, you can say simply "I can't answer that. I'm not an expert in that." **If you have any reservations, please contact the national office. [See Page 6.7 for contact information.]**

How CHADD Can Help You

As you work with reporters to disseminate your message about AD/HD, we encourage you to stay in close contact with the CHADD Communications and Media Relations Department. The department is staffed by professionals with years of experience that could prove beneficial to your efforts. If you have a media call that you have any concerns about, please feel free to contact us. Good Luck with all your efforts!

CHADD Communications & Media Relations Contacts:

Bryan Goodman, Director
Phone: 301-306-7070, ext. 128
bryan_goodman@chadd.org

Web sites Resources:

- CHADD: www.chadd.org
- National Resource Center on AD/HD (NRC): www.help4adhd.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov
- National Institute of Health (NIH) www.nih.gov

SAMPLES



For Immediate Release
Contact: Bryan Goodman, CHADD
301-306-7070, ext. 128

CHADD Applauds National Medical Association for Acknowledging AD/HD's Impact on African Americans

WASHINGTON (August 22, 2005) – CHADD—the nation’s leading organization serving children and adults with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD)—today praised the National Medical Association (NMA) for approving a resolution acknowledging the impact of the disorder on African Americans.

The resolution was passed by the NMA’s House of Delegates at the association’s Annual Convention and Scientific Assembly in New York. As the nation’s oldest and largest organization representing African American physicians and their patients, NMA’s positions on medical issues carry considerable weight in the medical field, serving as a guidepost to its 30,000 members, many of whom diagnose and treat AD/HD. The organization’s actions also help refute the contention, often disseminated in the media, that the disorder either does not exist or is over-diagnosed in African Americans.

“We now have, for the first time, a leading organization of African American physicians asserting that AD/HD is a neurobiological disorder that can adversely affect African Americans,” said Rahn K. Bailey, M.D, chair of the NMA section on psychiatry and the behavioral sciences. “I have long thought that untreated AD/HD very well could be one reason why we are over-represented in special education services and the criminal justice system. The great tragedy, though, is that the news media have arrived at a different and, I might add, very unscientific finding that African Americans are being over-diagnosed.”

“We are delighted that the NMA passed this resolution acknowledging the seriousness of AD/HD and the impact it can have on African Americans,” said CHADD CEO E. Clarke Ross, D.P.A. “We look forward to working with the NMA and others to make sure that access to good mental health care and treatment is available for everyone, regardless of race or income.”

The resolution names the following four crucial positions of the NMA on AD/HD:

- AD/HD exists, it occurs in African American children and adults, and can be detrimental to African Americans;
- There is evidence-based medicine to support the contention that AD/HD is an actual disorder;
- African American children and adults directly and indirectly may suffer a disproportionate burden because of AD/HD; and
- African American children deserve the highest quality of psychiatric medical care including optimal assessment, evaluation and diagnosis including a full unrestricted open access to the best available medication for the treatment of AD/HD and depression.

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Passage of the resolution is the culmination of work that began officially more than a year ago when CHADD convened leading experts on AD/HD in the African American community to develop a consensus statement on the disorder's effects on African Americans. The statement was later introduced to the NMA section on psychiatry and behavioral sciences by Dr. Bailey, which led to its passage by the full organization.

"Dr. Bailey was instrumental in every stage of the process," said Dr. Ross. "He was instrumental in developing the consensus statement, getting it introduced in the NMA section on psychiatry and shepherding it until it was approved."

Dr. Ross noted that several other people were essential in developing the consensus statement, including:

- **M. Christopher Griffith**, M.D., and **Karen Taylor-Crawford**, M.D., both members of the NMA's section on psychiatry and behavioral sciences and members of CHADD's professional advisory board;
- **Diane Buckingham**, M.D., chair-elect of the NMA's section on psychiatry and behavioral sciences; and
- **Peter Jensen**, M.D., the lead researcher on the National Institute of Mental Health Multimodal Treatment Study of AD/HD and currently director for the Center for the Advancement of Children's Mental Health at Columbia University and a member of CHADD's professional advisory board.

In 2001, the U.S. Surgeon General released a report entitled *Health: Culture, Race and Ethnicity* which documented that African American children were less likely than white youth to receive quality mental health services. Since then, CHADD has been proactive in supporting the Surgeon General's recommendations through its work with the NMA and by hosting a briefing on AD/HD for the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). A special video address by former Surgeon General David Satcher, M.D., was played at the CBC briefing.

With more than 16,000 members nationwide, CHADD is the nation's leading advocacy organization serving families and individuals affected by AD/HD. CHADD works to improve the lives of people affected by AD/HD through collaborative leadership, advocacy, research, education and support: CHADD CARES.

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SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

Media Advisory

WHAT: A FREE community forum on AD/HD in the Spanish-speaking community presented by Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)

WHEN: Saturday, October 28, 2006, from 8:30 a.m. to noon

WHERE: UIC Student Center, 750 So. Halsted

HOW TO REGISTER: To reserve a seat, call 1-800-849-9204 ASAP!

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SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

As the father of a 16-year-old son with learning disorders and attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and as the CEO of the nation's largest family organization serving those affected by ADHD, I write to express my dismay with Elizabeth J. Roberts' Oct. 8 guest column, "A Rush to Medicate Young Minds."

While Dr. Roberts raises some valid concerns about diagnosing childhood mental health disorders, she seemed to oversimplify the problem and provide antiquated solutions, including implying that parents should just shape up. Creating fear and guilt is not the answer to these complex issues.

CHADD family members can attest to the fact that even the best parenting skills in the world are no substitute for treating a neurobiological disorder with the best science has to offer. For two years my wife and I delayed treating my son with medication. At the time, we thought we were being good parents. We now realize we lost two very important years of helping our son battle the disorders with which he continues to struggle dearly.

Sincerely,

E. Clarke Ross

CEO

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