

“Bee Involved”



In Teen
Pregnancy
Prevention
Communication



Acknowledgments

April, 2001

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To request additional copies of “Bee Involved” in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Communication, please contact the Department of Human Services Adult and Family Services Division at (503) 945-5600.



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“Bee Involved”

Introduction

The Oregon Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Action Agenda spells out the enormous social and economic costs of teen pregnancies and six strategies to help prevent them.

You, as coalition leaders, have worked on those strategies, have already had success and know you make a difference.

But it's an on-going task to get people to “Pay Attention!” in a world overrun with messages.

So this booklet covers communication basics. Items are cross-referenced to help you connect the dots and raise public awareness.

This booklet is designed to help you “Bee Involved” to put those strategies in action in a communication plan for the year. A plan for communication

with the media, with teens, parents, schools, business people, the faith organizations and your community at large.

These varied audiences require constant, consistent, persistent communication in a variety of ways to get your message across.

The saying, “it takes a village to raise a child” is on the mark. You're connecting with other concerned citizens to help teenagers make positive choices for their lives.

Even though the number of teen pregnancies in Oregon has decreased, as Governor John Kitzhaber stated, “We still have work to do.”

Communication is key to getting that work done.



"I. Resources"

Getting your resources together

As a coalition, you need to "know yourself" and "be prepared" to communicate about teen pregnancy prevention. It's a big idea, one to change society and change lives.

To figure out your communication tools and plan, take stock of where you are.

Identify resources you have and what they can do to spread the word, such as someone with media contacts or whose newsletter goes to teens.

Then identify what you need to broaden your efforts. Knowing what you need is the first step to getting it. Actions that help:

- Brainstorm with your group.
- Look at what other groups have done.
- Start a communications notebook.

Identify audiences you want to reach.

Work on *one clear message* to build upon as you communicate with these different groups through the year.

Get facts, statistics and stories at your fingertips to convince reporters and editors they should tell your story. Think as editors do, how this story will interest their readers and viewers.

Get information together that will tell readers and viewers how this issue affects them and what they can do about it.

Take time to put your resources together. Then you can keep the message in the public view all year. And it keeps you from going crazy each time a demand or opportunity for communication comes up. (See Part III, Creating a Communication Plan).

Identifying and gathering your resources so they're easily accessible is going to make it much easier to create a communication plan. And then, make that plan happen!





Getting your resources together

“Checklist”

Recruit:

- Individuals with media/communications experience from groups such as Toastmasters, advertising agencies or the media in your area.
- Teen interns who want to work with the media.

Make a list of:

- Communication tasks (e.g. gather information for stories, write news releases and fact sheets, do radio or television interviews, give video presentations).
- Coalition members and their communication talents and/or willingness and time to take on communication tasks.
- Coalition groups and their information channels. Think of every possible means of communication (e.g., school

newspapers or parent call systems, P.T.A. newsletters, community events). See Part IIC, Targeted media.

- Audiences you want to reach.
- What you need to communicate better.

Create a file of:

- Basic information on each program used in your area. Include:
 - Program name, its main purpose.
 - Who uses it and their ages.
 - Testimonial comments from parents, teachers and teens.
 - Personal teen success stories to draw on as anecdotes for articles, interviews and speeches.
 - Clippings, notices of coverage.



“Checklist”

Getting your resources together *(continued)*

Gather statistics, stories, etc. from electronic resources*:

- www.hr.state.or.us/tpp
- www.siecus.org (site for program planners, educators and parents).
- www.teenpregnancy.org (site for program planners and policy makers).
- www.arhp.org (site for the public and health care professionals).
- www.teenwire.org (site for teens).
- www.iwannaknow.org (site for teens, parents).

Write a brief history of your coalition:

- When it started.
- Who’s involved.
- How it’s gotten people involved.
- The coalition’s success stories.

Start a communications notebook (and/or electronic file) of this material that various coalition members can use and that can be handed on to future members.

- Use this material to compile material for a press kit (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, Part N, Compiling a press kit).

Create coalition letterhead.

*Resources

Cited from *The Rational Enquirer* Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention newsletter published by the Oregon Health Division Department of Human Services, 800 N.E. Oregon St. #21, Portland, OR 97232.



Getting to know the media “II. Media”

Every city and town has a range of news or mass media:

- print media—daily and weekly newspapers, news magazines, newsletters and wire services.
- broadcast media: radio—all-news radio stations, music or talk radio with news.
- broadcast media: television—local and cable stations, national news services and networks.
- electronic media—Internet-distributed news magazines, news services and links on sites that touch on different subjects. (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, sections A-I).

Most coalitions don't have big budgets to buy media advertising. But you can get coverage. It's free. You just have to work at it. You can generate awareness through news and publicity.

Getting started:

Think of a reporter's basic information needs—which are the same for print and broadcast—a story that's newsworthy, timely and can meet reporters' deadlines. (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, sections E, F and N on pitching stories to the media).

What's newsworthy?

On a slow news day, the definition of what's newsworthy broadens as editors scramble to fill space.

But most often, their problem is how to fit everything in the space by what they deem newsworthy.

“Sharing your news, a guide for getting your story to The Oregonian”* defines a “newsworthy” story as one that meets one or more of these criteria:

- Novelty—an unusual or unique story. When dog bites man, it's not news. When man bites dog, it is.
- Records—the first, the best, the worst, the tallest, the shortest. If something stands out from everything else, it may be newsworthy.

*RESOURCE: Call Oregonian Public Affairs at 503-221-8336 for a free copy of “Sharing Your News.”



“IL Media”

Getting to know the media *(continued)*

- Consequence—a development that will have a significant impact on some or all of the audience.
- Human interest—a story revealing something quirky, colorful or dramatic about human character.
- Prominence—information or news about a public figure, organization or recognizable person.
- Proximity—information or news that has an effect on people living in the area.

Also newsworthy: milestones, benchmarks, seasonal events, money matters, how-to, overcoming the odds.

What’s timely?

The story fits current happenings and concerns. Right time for a back-to-school piece? Late August.

What are the deadlines?

They vary (from minutes to weeks). Make sure you know the proper lead time to meet deadlines.





Getting to know the media

“Checklist”

Get to know all the media in your area:

- Use the Oregon Blue Book, available at public libraries or on the Internet www.bluebook.state.or.us
- Check your local Yellow Pages.
- Purchase the Oregon Media Directory (Big Yellow Publishing, 503-246-1126).

Make a list or electronic database of media in your area with:

- Media name, phone and FAX numbers.
- Mailing address of each media outlet.

Call each media outlet to determine:

- Deadlines for news and calendar items.
- Which reporter covers:
 - schools, youth social issues.
 - personal interest stories.
 - editorial, guest opinions.

- letters to the editor.
- calendar items, etc.

Call The Oregonian:

- Find out your area’s correspondent if you live outside Portland.

Then add any other media in your area:

- Neighborhood newspapers.
- Special interest groups’ publications (e.g. civic, faith, cultural and youth groups).
- High school or college newspapers, etc. (See Part II,C Targeted media and also Part IV, Mastering Tools of the trade, section J, Targeted media.)

Then read, watch and listen – closely.

- Assign coalition members to study and survey each of your media listings. Figure out what that medium does that fits your need to communicate with your community.



“Checklist”

Getting to know the media *(continued)*

Make friends with key editors and reporters who produce news stories, features, editorials, etc.

- Call them. Introduce yourself, the coalition and what your goals are. Ask if they'd meet you. Become their teen pregnancy prevention expert resource.
- Send them a press/media kit (See Part IV Mastering the tools of the trade, Section N, Compiling a press kit.)
- Include a fact sheet and brief interesting information on your coalition. Add a press release if you have current news.

- Help them do their jobs so they can help you inform the public and give a call to action.

Be a resource to reporters.

Send them copies of newsletters or national coverage they may not have seen. Provide them with real news.

- Call them when you see a story that helps youth. Let them know they did a good job.
- Call them about an upcoming event.
- Always call or write to thank them for talking or meeting with you or doing even a news brief.

(See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, section E Pitching news; Section F, Pitching features and section O, Pitching media.)



Getting to know the media *(continued)*

Mass media

1. Newspapers

It's nice to get in the papers.

First, it's something you can copy to leverage your coverage. Second, it's nice because radio and TV news people get a lot of their news from newspapers.

Getting coverage

- Clip and study examples of different newspaper writing for style, tone (e.g. hard-news serious or more informal feature tone) and structure.
- Then target your news to the right editor and reporter in a way that will interest them and show them you know what they're doing.
- Always use coalition letterhead.
- Always include a contact name, number, e-mail.

You almost always want to send your news to the papers. But different sections work for different issues at different times.

You can access newspapers in many ways.

A letter to the editor is one of the easiest. Write one related to your important issues to:

- Respond to an article in the paper.
- Point out information not in the paper. (See part IV A, Mastering tools of the trade, Section A, Letters to the editor.)

An op-ed piece runs opposite the editorial page and is an opinion piece usually written by a community member with a strong interest in a topic. (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, Section B, Op-ed pieces).

An editorial presents an opinion of an editorial writer about an event or issue facing the community and can have great influence.

It's best to ask editorial writers to write an editorial when the issue needs focus, awareness and action by the public. (See Part IV Mastering tools of the trade, section C, Editorials.)



“II. Media”

Getting to know the media (*continued*)

A calendar item is another quick easy way to access newspapers. You can send calendar items to the media when you have events, meetings, conferences, etc.

Different parts of the paper (e.g. business, food section, entertainment) run different calendars. (See *Part IV Mastering tools of the trade, section D, Calendars.*)

A news story is factual and objective. It's best to pitch a news story about “breaking news” happening right now, news that has happened that needs analysis or news of future events. (See *Part IV Mastering tools of the trade, section E, Pitching news stories.*)

A feature story is often called “soft news” and is about events, entertainment, popular culture, trends of different age groups, etc. Features:

- Are found in the Living section, among others.
- Are written in a more narrative story style.
- Include facts and figures about trends, happenings and people's lives.

(See *Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, section F, Pitching feature stories.*)



Getting to know the media *(continued)*

Mass media

2. Radio

Most radio stations feature news as part of their broadcasts.

Radio as a mass medium has the advantage of being very immediate.

If you have a breaking news story (something happening right now), contact a radio station to get quick coverage.

For news of upcoming events, you should FAX or e-mail a release to your area radio stations.

Radio news people go out and report stories, but when they get an interesting press release, they often call for immediate on-air telephone interviews.

They like to know what people can do about the situation and who to call for more information.

Send a news release to a radio station whenever you have breaking news or an upcoming event.

Radio stations also run 30- or 60-second public service announcements (PSA's). These are spots about community issues and events.

It's good to try to get radio stations to run public service announcements to promote a large upcoming event or to emphasize a message theme. (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, section G, Radio news and section P, Broadcast interviews.)



"II. Media"

Getting to know the media (*continued*)

Mass media

3. Television-cable

About 98 percent of homes have television and studies show people watch many hours a day.

So TV is the mass media that reaches the largest audiences.

Local news programs on network television stations are your best bet for getting coverage.

Local community programs are another outlet for coverage.

Cable channels also run community programming.

Both network and cable TV run calendar items of community events. (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, section D, Calendars.)

Some stations run free 30 or 60 second spots called public service announcements (PSA's). (See Part IV, Mastering the tools of the trade, section H, Radio public service.)

But now most stations do PSA's through "cause-related sponsorships."

You work with the station to find sponsors who will pay for the production and broadcast of your public service announcement.

The sponsor's name is mentioned at the beginning or end of the spot.

Contact the stations with a press release when you have a newsworthy story that:

- is timely.
- has an effect on people in the community.
- has interesting visuals.

Check with cable stations to see if they will help you produce public service announcements.

Contact the public affairs department and or the sales department of a television station to see if you can work with them to get a sponsor for spots about teen pregnancy prevention. (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, section P, Broadcast interviews.)



Getting to know the media *(continued)*

Mass media

4. Electronic media

Getting on the Internet is getting easier. The electronic media has a large and widespread need for information.

Many web sites have places to link to information or news-you-can-use areas. And list servers are also looking for information and are places you can hook up with for new ways to distribute your information.

Consider Internet sites as another place for op-ed pieces or other articles written by members of your coalition.

Also work on creating your own website. It's getting easier to do.

It's time to make Internet communication a regular part of your communication efforts.

Anytime you have a newsworthy story, it's worthwhile to find an Internet outlet for it as well as print and broadcast media.



"II. Media"

Getting to know the media *(continued)*

Other media

Print, broadcast and electronic media are all important ways to communicate with your community.

But they're not the only methods to get your message out by any means.

Messages are everywhere: on billboards, buses, grocery bags, bumper stickers and on movie screens, brochures, fliers and door hangers, to name a few.

These are also considered mass media because they go out to a general audience.

However, these items can be targeted to certain areas, neighborhoods or schools.

Sometimes you have to pay to get your message out via these vehicles.

For instance, you have to pay to have a billboard produced and to have it posted.

But sometimes you can get the billboard or bus company or theater to run your message for free.

Usually you still have to pay to have the material produced.

But you might find a sponsor who will pay for printing grocery bags or producing theater slides because these costs are relatively small. (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, Section K, Other media.)



Getting to know the media *(continued)*

Targeted media

When you want to direct your message to a specific audience, you choose media that targets that audience. For example:

- Target middle school kids through their school newspaper.
- Target parents of middle school kids through newsletters they receive.
- Target adults through mail sent to them directly. (They're more likely to read it if their name and address are handwritten.)

Targeting specific messages to a certain group of people makes a lot of sense. You can target:

- Business people for financial support.
- Faith-based organizations for program involvement.
- Parents for a forum on talking with their kids about teen sexuality.

Targeted media can be low-cost with high returns. But it requires creative, well-thought out ideas and communication.

A teen pregnancy prevention article in a high school newspaper could be the most-read thing in that issue or barely looked at.

Getting those readers to pay attention means knowing them well enough to talk their language and not talk down to them.

(See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, section J, Targeted media.)



“III. Communication”

Creating a communication plan

You’ve gotten resources together— the stories you want to tell and audiences you want to reach.

You’ve made a survey and database of available media in your area.

You know your message, your “product” position: Preventing teen pregnancy is a benefit to teens who have more choices, more chances for success in their lives by not taking on early parenthood.

And it’s a benefit to the community by helping young people become more productive with their lives and by keeping down welfare and medical costs for teen parents and their babies.

You’re ready to create a communication plan.

It’s really pretty simple. A plan is figuring out ways to repeatedly get your message out to the audiences you want to reach throughout the year.

If you have a budget for an advertising campaign, slot those ads in when you feel they’ll make the most impact. Get professional advice from an ad agency or even media sales people.

Also, bring the media’s attention to your ads and use the ads to get some publicity about the issue.

If you’re working with a small budget, figure out some important pieces you really want to do and work on getting business sponsorship, e.g., television spots or billboard production. (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, section H, Radio public service.)

Be creative about vehicles to address the issue. We all know teen sexuality and pregnancy can be difficult topics for a lot of people.

But helping kids make good choices for their lives is an easy idea to agree with.

You know your community and what works best there. Which is why you have to make your very own communication plan.

The following is a sample communication plan with some ideas on:

- Determining your message.
- Tailoring it to the group you want to reach.
- Creating news.
- Getting media coverage.
- Communicating the message of teen pregnancy prevention with the audiences you want to reach.



“III. Communication”

Creating a communication plan *(continued)*

Sample communication plan for teen pregnancy prevention

— May —

AUDIENCE	MESSAGE	ACTIVITY
Media/Community at large	May is TPP Month. Everyone needs to be involved in helping youth make good choices for their lives about sexuality and pregnancy.	Press kit to all media with statistics and coalition philosophy and activities.
Middle School youth	You're important and you can make good choices for yourself.	School newsletter articles. Poster unveiling ceremony.
Their parents	Your middle school children need your wisdom and support regarding choices about sexuality and pregnancy.	Coalition coffees with neighbors who have middle school children.
Business groups	You can help youth have wholesome fun activities that give them good choices.	Presenting video to four area business groups such as Rotary.
Faith groups	You can help middle school youth learn to make good choices for themselves regarding sexuality and pregnancy.	High school teens talk to middle school youth at four church youth groups.



“III. Communication”

Creating a communication plan *(continued)*

Sample communication plan for teen pregnancy prevention

—June—

AUDIENCE	MESSAGE	ACTIVITY
Media/Community at large	In summer time youth needs wholesome and fun activities to make good choices of how they spend their time.	Press release and photos to print and broadcast media of active youth having fun. Work hard to get TV.
Middle School youth	You don't have to grow up too fast. You can enjoy being young and having fun in the summer.	A youth get-together with hot dogs, pop, baseball, volleyball and info on youth activities for summer.
Their parents	It's hard for working parents to supervise pre-teens and teens through the summer. To help, here's some info on activities.	Distribute door hangers on youth groups with summer activities and their phone numbers.
Business groups	You can help youth make good decisions for their lives by sponsoring a fun event for kids with info for parents on summer fun.	Sponsorship of a youth get-together with hot dogs, pop, baseball, volleyball and info on summer youth activities.
Faith groups	Help youth have an active, positive summer.	Invite church youth groups to the event.



“III. Communication”

Creating a communication plan *(continued)*

Sample communication plan for teen pregnancy prevention

— July —

AUDIENCE	MESSAGE	ACTIVITY
Media/Community at large	Value of family vacations. The families that play together help children make good choices.	Press release on importance of family fun, time to talk. Flyer available on how to talk to teens.
Middle School youth	You can have fun with your folks and talk to them about the choices you face.	Flyer at youth groups- how to talk to your parents.
Their parents	Make good memories and make time to talk with your children about the choices they face regarding sexuality and pregnancy.	Flyer at service groups on how to talk with pre-teens and teens.
Business groups	Help parents find time for fun and talk with their children.	Sponsor a “trip with your teen.”
Faith groups	Encourage parents to find time for fun and talk with their children.	Letter to ministers on good topic for summer sermon - family fun, family talk.



✓ IV. Checklist

Mastering tools of the trade

Write well. It's vital to your communication — both written and spoken.

- Keep and use an idea file of good quotes, phrases and anecdotes. (See Part I, Getting your resources together.)
 - Keep your audience in mind for tone (write differently for teens than for ministers; write more informally for features than hard news).
 - Start with an outline of important points.
 - Write the way you talk. Bring your writing down to earth. Don't make a janitor a "custodial engineer."
 - Use short words, sentences and paragraphs.
 - Cover the five "W's" of basic journalism up front and factually— Who, What, When, Where, Why (and sometimes How). Facts, not opinions.
- Use the "inverted pyramid" style of writing that journalists use for news stories. That is, put the most important fact first, followed by the next most important, etc.
 - Use third person (He, she or they, not I or you).
 - Use subject-verb sentences in the active voice. For example: "She started the coalition" rather than "The coalition was started by her."
 - Avoid jargon, e.g. "systems implementation."
 - When finished writing, read your piece aloud to see if it flows and is easy to understand.
 - Edit/proof your work yourself.
 - Always have someone else proof your work too.



Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)* “IV. Checklist”

Get these reference books – and use them!

- “The Associated Press Style Book and Libel Manual” edited by Norm Goldstein. (*Addison-Wesley-Longman Publishing Co.*)
- “The Elements of Style,” by William Strunk and E.B. White, (*The Macmillan Company*).
- “On Writing Well,” by William Zinsser, (*Harper & Row*).

Use these basics for writing coalition communication:

- Determine the message you want to convey.
- Know who it will be sent to (specific contact names).
- Make sure the material meets deadlines. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, section A1, Mass Media, Newspapers.)

- Write a first draft, then edit and proof.
- Use quotes from youth and parents as well as members and experts.
- Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper, coalition letterhead.
- Keep the piece to one page whenever possible, either all double-spaced or double-spaced between paragraphs.
- At the top include the date and:
 - When the material can be published (usually FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE).
 - At least one contact name, phone number and e-mail address of someone available to the media and knowledgeable about the subject matter.
- Distribute in most efficient way possible (usually by FAX or e-mail).
- Reply to all media contacts on a release within an hour.



"IV. Checklist"

Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)*

A. Writing a letter to the editor:

- Be brief (150 words or less).
- Be logical and yet passionate about the subject.
- Include name, address, phone number, signature.
- You can have many coalition members write their own letters to show broad community concern. (See Section II, Getting to know the media, A1, Mass media, Newspapers.)

B. Writing an op-ed (opposite the editorial page) opinion piece:

- Present a clear point of view.
- Support it with facts, statistics and anecdotes.
- Show the problem and actions that readers can do. (See Section II, Getting to know the media, A1, Mass media, Newspapers).

C. Getting editorial coverage:

- Figure out an important angle on your subject that needs commentary.
- Call the editorial board or department and ask to meet with them to present your coalition's work, the problem and possible solutions.
- Have statistics, personal teen stories, and the coalition's story written up and ready to present.
- Give the editorial board a press kit with that information. (See Section II, Getting to know the media, A1, Mass media, Newspapers.)

D. Writing calendar items:

- Send your calendar item to the right section.
- Briefly tell Who, What, When, Where and Why. (See Section II, Getting to know the media, A1, Newspapers and A2, Radio and A3 Television-cable).



Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)* **“IV. Checklist”**

A sample calendar item

February 15, 2001
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jane Doe, Marion County Teen Pregnancy Prevention coalition chair, 503-555-5555.

- WHO:** Teen actors from three area high schools, Grant, Jefferson and Washington.
- WHAT:** Presenting “The Teen Dream,” a drama and discussion for teens and parents on preventing teen pregnancy.
- WHEN:** Friday, March 1, 2001, 7 p.m.
- WHERE:** The auditorium of Grant High School at 111 Main.
- COST:** Free to the public.
- WHY:** To help parents and teens discuss important choices teens have to face.



✓ #IV. Checklist”

Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)*

E. Pitching news stories:

- Pitch news stories on such things as upcoming events, new statistics, programs, members of your coalition, approaches, even new controversy.
- Call the appropriate editor or reporter and FAX or e-mail a press release. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, Section A1, Newspapers.)

F. Pitching features:

- You can tailor your issues to fit feature writers’ needs throughout the year (for example an “After-School Blues” story at the beginning of the school year to help parents find ways to keep their children involved in group activities and less likely to be involved in sexual activities).
- Pitch stories for features that present good photo shots, people in action, kids doing something positive.

- Have photo release clearances from parents for kids to be photographed and interviewed ahead of your contact with the media. (See Section II, Getting to know the media, Section A1, Newspapers.)

G. Radio news:

- Send information regularly. Let them know what your coalition is doing.
- Be sure you include the 5 W’s in whatever you send (Who, What, Where, When and Why).
- Make the contact person someone who is readily available.
- Also be sure the contact person knows the subject, is prepared to talk articulately and can get immediately to the point. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, section A2, Radio.)



Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)* “IV. Checklist”

H. Checklist for radio public service announcements (PSA's).

- Check to see if your local stations air PSA's.
- Check to see if they prefer “live” spots read on air by disc jockeys or pre-recorded spots. (Live radio-ready spots timed to 15, 30 or 60 seconds have the best chance of getting aired.)
- You can create public service announcements about your issue in general or about your events.
- Some stations will do public service campaigns on issues they find important.
- Some advertisers will sponsor public service campaigns. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, section A3, Radio).

I. Checklist for electronic media:

- Check with electronic wire services to see if they'd like to be on your e-mail press release list. They need a steady diet of facts and news items and often use press releases.
- Once you've determined web sites you want to send material to, e-mail them to determine their submission policies. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, section A4, Electronic media.)

J. Checklist for writing materials for targeted media

- Know your audience and what motivates them.
- Have a clear message that fits your audience.
- Show how the problem affects that audience. Always give each audience something they can do about the problem. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, Section C, Targeted media.)



✓ **“IV. Checklist”**

Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)*

K. Checklist for other media:

- Find as many alternative media as you can in your area.
- Locate contacts for them.
- Find out what access is free and when. Start by trying one vehicle related to an event or as part of your overall campaigns.
- Be sure your graphics and message are consistent with other things you put out.
- Line up a sponsor to help you pay for production costs. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, Section B, Other media.)

L. Checklist for writing a press release:

- Quickly and easily identify the news value of your story.
- Include basic information that answers the 5 W's (Who, What Where, When and Why).
- Make sure news is timely, e.g. about an event that's

going to happen or a just-released report.

- Answer the question, “Why should I care about this?”

Follow the basics:

- Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper, coalition letterhead.
- Keep the piece to one page, either all double-spaced or double-spaced between paragraphs.

At the top include:

- The date, and when the material can be published (e.g., FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE).
- At least one contact name, phone number and and e-mail address of someone available to the media and knowledgeable about the subject matter.
- Write a one-line headline summarizing what the release is about. Use subject-action verb.
- The first paragraph should include information that answers “why should I care about this.”



Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)* “IV. Checklist”

L. Checklist for writing a press release *(continued)*

- Any people mentioned or quoted should have their titles listed with their names (e.g. Joe Brown, chairman of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention coalition).
- Quote youth and parents as well as coalition members and experts.
- Avoid abbreviations. On first reference use the full name (e.g. Department of Human Services). Then refer to it as the department or agency.
- Be as clear in your writing as possible. If using numbers, put them in context, e.g. \$5 million agency budget.
- Don't editorialize. Write as a neutral observer, backing up statements with facts.
- Don't write the coalition's entire history. If a reporter is interested, he'll ask for details. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, section A1, Newspapers.)



✓ "IV. Checklist"

Mastering tools of the trade (continued)

A sample press release



Oregon
Gov. A. Richardson, M.D., Governor

Department of Human Services

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April 28, 2000

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Oregon's teen pregnancy rate declines over five years **State adopts new plan to continue the decline**

Oregon's efforts to reduce teen pregnancies are paying off. A new report from the Department of Human Services' Health Division shows the state has significantly decreased the rate of teen pregnancies.

From 1994 through 1998 the Oregon teen pregnancy rate decreased 9 percent. The 1998 rate is 17.2 pregnancies per 1,000 females ages 10 - 17, compared with 18.9 in 1994.

"Oregon's teen pregnancy rate didn't decrease by accident. It happened because many people and organizations throughout the state have worked hard in their local communities," says DHS Director Gary Weeks.

To help state agencies and local communities continue the downward trend the Department of Human Services has released an updated statewide plan, the *Oregon Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Action Agenda 2000* (attached).

"This comprehensive approach is critical to our success. No one approach can achieve the goal. We need all strategies and all groups to work together to achieve our goal," says Weeks.

The data

Oregon teen pregnancy statewide and county trends show there have been an average of 3,229 teen pregnancies per year in Oregon during 1994-1998.

Six counties had a five-year combined rate that was significantly higher than the state rate (**Jefferson, Multnomah, Marion, Malheur, Klamath and Umatilla**).

Thirteen counties had a combined five-year rate that was statistically significantly lower than the state rate (**Baker, Benton, Clackamas, Curry, Deschutes, Grant, Jackson, Josephine, Polk, Tillamook, Union, Wallowa and Washington**).

-more-

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“IV. Checklist”

Mastering tools of the trade (*continued*)

A sample press release (*continued*)

Multnomah and Malheur counties had significantly decreasing rates for teen pregnancies during the time period.

The *Oregon Health Trends* (Series No. 55) report contains detailed information about each county's progress in reducing teen pregnancies. It can be found on the web at www.oshd.org/chs/ohr.htm

The Oregon Benchmarks call for a reduction of teen pregnancy to 15 per 1,000 females ages 10 - 17 for the calendar year 2000.

The plan

Action Agenda 2000 emphasizes the importance of local efforts at preventing adolescent pregnancy, notes that all Oregonians share responsibility and stresses that a comprehensive approach is critical to success.

The six strategies of *Action Agenda 2000*:

1. *Positive community values and norms.* Build positive community values and norms through public awareness, adult involvement and cooperation of stakeholders.
2. *Skills for life.* Support and promote school- and community-based life skills development, including comprehensive sex education that is research-based and modeled after proven effective educational strategies for both girls and boys.
3. *Abstinence education.* Make abstinence education available to all youth, emphasizing skill building to resist pressure to engage in premature sexual involvement.
4. *Contraceptive access.* Assist sexually active youth to avoid pregnancy by providing timely education, outreach and access to contraceptive services.
5. *Male involvement and leadership.* Encourage and provide opportunities for males (youth and adults) to be actively involved in adolescent pregnancy prevention, both on a personal level and in the community.
6. *Legal issues and protections.* Support uniform application of statutory rape and sexual abuse statutes to reduce teen pregnancy. Ensure that children have financial and emotional support from both parents.

Additional copies of *Action Agenda 2000* are available by calling the DHS Adult and Family Services Division at (503) 945-5600.

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✓ "IV. Checklist"

Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)*

M. Checklist for writing a fact sheet:

A fact sheet is a quick list of facts about your effort with a local angle media can use. You can use fact sheets to recruit new members or to inform community groups and in many other ways.

Use the basics:

- Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper, coalition letterhead.
- Keep the piece to one page, if possible, either all double-spaced or double-spaced between paragraphs.

At the top include:

- The date.
- At least one contact name, phone number and e-mail address of someone available and knowledgeable about the subject matter.
- A one-line headline.

- Then write clear and complete sentences not open to interpretation.
- Include sources of the facts when possible, or how to find the reports.
- Add names of experts in the area who can talk more about the points listed.

Kinds of facts to include:

- Numbers of people affected statewide, regionally and locally (by city, if possible).
- Local availability of different kinds of options/help available for people affected.
- Cost or other budget information that's important for the media and public to know.
- Time comparisons-on how much the problem has increased over a year, five years, etc.
- Geographic comparisons-on what results other states or counties have had.



Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)* “IV. Checklist”

N Checklist for compiling a press kit (also known as a media kit):

A press kit is a way to package information about your coalition and its activities.

The material can be changed as time goes on and tailored to different situations.

Use a press kit when:

- You're introducing yourself to a reporter or editor.
- You want to follow-up an initial media call.
- You're asked for more information on teen pregnancy prevention, the coalition or a TPP program in your area.
- You're introducing yourself and the coalition to schools, businesses, church groups, or other community organizations.

Your press kit (a nice folder with two inside pockets) might include:

- A fact sheet on what the coalition is and what it does.
- One or more news releases about your coalition's current or upcoming activities.
- A background sheet on the history of the issue and your coalition's work.
- Quotes testifying to your good work.
- Clips from media coverage.
- Photos of activities.



"IV. Checklist"

Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)*

Q Checklist on pitching a story:

You and your coalition members have gathered story ideas, facts, good quotes and anecdotes about teen pregnancy prevention in your area. (See Part I, Getting your resources together.)

And you've surveyed the area media and made a good database so you know who's who and what kind of stories they do.

You've even introduced yourself and the coalition to the media.

You've figured out what's newsworthy to them and you have a story you think should be told. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, section A1, Newspapers).

Good for you! You're ready to pitch a story.

Here's how to do it.

These tips are taken from "Be a Media Winner" by Jim Sellers, of the Oregon Department of Human Services.

Figure out your SOCO.

That stands for Single Overriding Communication Objective, the critical message you want the reporter and audience to hear, no matter what.

It could be as simple as "It takes the involvement of the whole community to decrease the number of teen pregnancies."

Whatever the message, sensitivity to community values is paramount.

Put the idea together in a way a reporter will like. For their stories, reporters want anecdotes, numbers, records and real details. They also like stories that have photo opportunities.



Mastering tools of the trade (continued) **“IV. Checklist”**

Q Checklist on pitching a story (continued):

- Either call an editor or reporter or write them a one-page cover letter that lets them know:
 - The issue and the angle you’re suggesting.
 - Why it’s important to readers, listeners or viewers.
 - Why it’s important now.
 - Not all, but some of the facts and anecdotes you have to support the story.

If the reporter or editor is interested, you can follow up with a press kit with a fact sheet, background and people involved in the story. (See Part II, section A1 Newspapers. Also see Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, section N, Compiling a press kit and Part IV, section E, Pitching a news story.)

P. Checklist on Broadcast interviews:

Information needs of broadcast reporters are not that different from those of print reporters. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, section A2, Radio and A3, Television-cable).

They need the basic 5 W facts—Who, What, Where, When and Why.

The big difference: Radio and TV interviews go very quickly.

Their stories are usually only one or two minutes long—about five brief paragraphs.

So both radio and TV reporters are looking for “sound bites.”

They want good quotes that sum up a story and get to the heart of it very quickly.

They want people to talk who have been affected or impacted by the story.



"IV. Checklist"

Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)*

P. Checklist on Broadcast interviews *(continued)*:

Radio reporters will often do interviews by phone for breaking news or to follow up a release. They can talk about non-visual elements of a story.

Television reporters have to have visuals.

- You can help them do their stories by figuring out and suggesting photo possibilities with your story. (See Part II, Getting to know the media, section A2, Radio and A3, Television-cable).
- Assignment editors are gatekeepers who often say no to a story idea. If you've gotten to know a reporter, call them directly about your story.

To tell your story well, you have to know your story well.

- Think about the questions you may be asked.
- Be clear on confidentiality boundaries.

- Practice doing interviews with other coalition members so you can sound like the expert you are. (See Part IV, Mastering tools of the trade, section P, Public speaking.)

Practice:

- Stating the most important point first (in one sentence).
- Boiling down complicated information to the simplest terms possible.
- Using examples to show how something affects individuals or the community.
- Adding critical information even if not asked for it directly.
- Visualize yourself doing the interview well.





“IV. Checklist”

Mastering tools of the trade (*continued*)

For both radio and television interviews:

- Talk conversationally. Speak up in a clear voice.
- Use the “inverted pyramid,” most important facts first.
- Use people in examples so your story is not just statistics and numbers.
- If a question is unclear, don’t be afraid to ask the reporter to clarify it.
- Don’t make up answers. If you don’t know the answer, say so.

For television interviews:

- Make eye contact with the TV reporter.
- Dress professionally (in solid colors for TV).
- Don’t fidget, but do gesture to add emphasis.
- Show emotion when appropriate. A smile may help you relax.

Q Checklist on public speaking:

We all talk with one another.

Yet the idea of “public speaking” can cause icy fear in hearts of otherwise calm, collected people.

It doesn’t have to be that way for you.

You have a cause you believe in. You want your community to know about it, help with it and change lives for the better.

So you have a story to tell. And from the beginning of time, people have loved hearing stories—especially stories about people. It’s how we learn, connect and how we grow.

Getting started:

- Work on public speaking in your own meetings.
Take turns giving two-minute talks on different aspects of teen pregnancy prevention.
- Join the local Toastmasters Club where people help each other with public speaking skills.



✓ IV. Checklist”

Mastering tools of the trade (continued)

Q Checklist on public speaking (continued):

- When you go out to groups, start small.
Make the occasion informal and comfortable—an afternoon coffee where everyone’s sitting down.
- Because your coalition took time to get your resources together, you’ll have anecdotes and facts and figures at your fingertips.
- Before you go to speak—even informally—make a brief outline of three important points. Add some facts and personal stories as support.
- Then just go and talk. Be yourself. Show the emotion you feel about the subject. Let people know what they can do to help.

Speaking informally is great practice for more formal public speaking to larger groups.

And you will want to graduate to larger groups because it’s a great way to get your ideas out to the community.

- You’ll want to write a speech for a larger group.
An old joke goes, “How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, practice, practice.”
- Once you’re satisfied with your written speech, practice it: in front of a mirror with a friend and at a coalition meeting.
- After you’ve practiced your speech with others, change the points people don’t understand.

Preparing and writing public speeches

When writing a speech:

- Know who the audience is.
- Decide on the purpose of the talk to this audience.
- Know that they’ll be thinking, “What’s in it for me?” That is, how does it apply to me or how does your idea affect me?
- Focus on the beginning and ending with your overall purpose in mind.



Mastering tools of the trade (continued) “IV. Checklist”

- Start with a brief story about particular people who can illustrate your purpose.
- Work in facts, background and details that support your purpose in an interesting and entertaining way.
- Use sources, studies, newspaper reports, quotes to make these points—usually three or four.
- Create a transition section, or bridge to the close of your speech. Again, an anecdote is often good that connects to the points made and illustrates the purpose of your speech.
- The close relates back to the example given at the beginning and sums up the purpose of the speech.

When typing your written speech:

- Use 18-point type.
- Write one-sentence paragraphs.
- Use 1.5 line spacing.
- Don't jump a sentence from one page to the next.

Dealing with fear and anxiety

Visualize yourself being calm and collected doing an important thing for the prevention of teen pregnancy.

You can overcome fears when you know you're doing something that makes a difference.

When giving a speech

- Get on first in the lineup of speakers.
- Prepare a brief introduction of yourself for the person introducing you.
- Dress the part, that is a little better than the audience.



✓ #IV. Checklist”

Mastering tools of the trade *(continued)*

Q. Checklist on public speaking *(continued)*:

- Carry your equipment, your speech, glasses, pointer or any props.
- Avoid dry throat. Have a glass of water nearby.
- Greet your audience.
- Really use your voice, sometimes soft, sometimes emphatically or with enthusiasm.
- Make eye contact with different audience members.
- Employ gestures.
- Invite participation.
- Use props.
- Give out handouts after your speech.
- If you can be heard easily, come out from behind the podium.
- Keep calm.
- Know how to pronounce the words in your speech.

R. Checklist on holding a press conference:

- Best advice? Don't.

Presidents and governors hold press conferences and the media attends.

Unless you have very big news, it's highly unlikely that the media will come out for most press conferences.

So you can save yourself a lot of effort and disappointment by contacting reporters and editors through phone calls, FAX, or e-mails.

