

Think differently

Media Manual

Use the media to change attitudes and behaviour towards disabled people

www.thinkdifferently.org.nz

NOTE January 2017: The Think Differently campaign was run by the Ministry of Social Development for five years to mid-2015.

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Introduction

This manual has been produced to support community agencies to use the news media. It has been produced as part of Think Differently, which is a social change campaign to encourage and support a fundamental shift in attitudes and behaviour towards disabled people.

We know that it is a combination of community action, direct experience and strong communications messages that will help achieve the outcomes of the campaign:

- to increase the participation of disabled people in all aspects of community life
- to change social attitudes and behaviours that limit opportunities for disabled people.

There are opportunities to improve the way the New Zealand media covers disability. Think Differently's aims are to:

- improve coverage of disability in the media
- support spokespeople to get their messages out
- create a more supportive, inclusive environment for people with disabilities.

Why use the media?

The media plays an essential role in the Think Differently campaign to change social attitudes and behaviour. The media is a powerful influencer and shaper of community attitudes.

The media helps New Zealanders understand issues that affect them. Without the media how much would New Zealanders know about child abuse, fracking or sideline bullying?

The people who know most about disability need to be visible and vocal in the local and national media. This includes people with disabilities.

Together, we can use the media to help create an inclusive society that enables us to be the best we can be.

News is free. You can talk to and influence New Zealanders through the news media.

Key messages

The language of news is black and white, bold and simple. News is pitched to a reading age of 12 years. We scan newspapers and magazines, rarely reading every word. When we listen to the radio we are usually doing something else at the same time.

To be effective in the media you need to use the language of the media – bold words, strong statements, colourful quotes.

Short, powerful sentences that sum up your position are key messages. They are strongest when they are positive.

You will recognise the effectiveness of key messages from other national campaigns that have successfully changed attitudes:

- quitting smoking is hard work but you don't have to do it alone
- depression is more than just a low mood
- smoking in cars hurts children
- mental illness affects all kinds of people
- drinking and driving maims and kills
- wearing seatbelts saves lives.

Use your key messages in all your media activity. People hear strong clear key messages when we say them over and over again. They need to be statements listeners and readers can relate to and agree with.

You can also use key messages about your organisation to help raise your own profile.

List your key messages here. Put them on your letterhead and newsletters, on posters and emails.

Key messages:

1

2

3

4

5

6

Know your news outlets

To be effective in the news media, you need to know who your local news media are and what they are looking for.

Newspapers

Daily newspapers (eg New Zealand Herald, Southland Times) are usually published six days a week. They want fresh news that's happening now such as:

- statistics. These could be about trends in the people coming to your agency
- a new service starting up
- surveys and research results
- a visit or speech by an important person
- new plans and strategies
- community action activities including fundraising
- human interest stories (stories about people and their experiences such as an artist with autism on the trip of a lifetime or a poker champion with cerebral palsy).

Daily newspapers will also have space for features. These are longer articles that take an in-depth look at a topic or issue such as local trends or a local personality.

Community newspapers (eg Christchurch Mail, Ruapehu Press) are usually published weekly and delivered free to every household in a specific geographical area. They are widely read in communities all over New Zealand.

Community newspapers rely heavily on contributions from individuals and organisations. They often give space for a regular column to community organisations. Community newspapers are an excellent place to start building your confidence with the media. They will sometimes print high-resolution photos you send them.

Community newspapers need news that doesn't go out of date over the week such as:

- forthcoming events
- programmes
- human interest stories
- profiles of people and organisations.

Radio

Radio needs short sharp news and stories with quotes that are easy to understand and make a point quickly and succinctly (the 20 second sound-bite).

There are three national radio networks in New Zealand plus many local and special interest stations. In fact we have one of the highest ratios of radio stations per person in the world.

Radio likes big news events but there are many community stations interested in publicising local events and initiatives and talking to local people about local issues.

Radio New Zealand is our state-owned radio network. It has no commercial advertising and has newsrooms all over the country.

It is the station decision-makers listen to. Politicians listen to and are regularly featured on Radio New Zealand news programmes. Getting your messages on this medium will reach important and influential people. Radio New Zealand also has documentary and magazine style programmes where issues are examined in more depth.

There are two commercial radio networks with stations nationwide, MediaWorks and The Radio Network. They both have newsrooms in most cities in New Zealand.

Iwi or Māori radio stations cover most of New Zealand. There is a list of them here: www.irirangi.net/iwi-stations.aspx

There are dozens of other broadcasters such as Niu FM and 531pi (Pacific Islands) or Radio Tarana (Hindi), Christian, student and community radio stations.

Television

Television tells the news with pictures and can bring a story to life with live interviews. TV reporters look for stories with drama than can be told by interviews and pictures. TV newsrooms are located in the main centres but there are some regional reporters for TVOne and TV3.

TVOne and TV3 have news bulletins in the morning, early evening and late evening. Both stations have magazine shows (Seven Sharp and Campbell Live) that screen after the news and take a closer look at the issues of the day.

Prime has a news bulletin at 5.30pm each day.

Māori Television has a news bulletin, Te Kaea, at 7.30pm each day and other opportunities such as in-depth current affairs show Native Affairs.

Internet

All the major media outlets have web pages carrying the latest news. Sometimes they will run more information – they might link to your organisation's website or run a box with facts or tips that you send them.

Useful sites are:

- Stuff, for Fairfax newspapers site www.stuff.co.nz
- New Zealand Herald www.nzherald.co.nz
- Radio New Zealand www.radionz.co.nz
- Newstalk ZB (for Radio Network news)
www.newstalkzb.co.nz
- Radiolive (MediaWorks news site) www.radiolive.co.nz

You can track what people are saying on social media (eg Twitter, Facebook, TradeMe Community message boards, photos and videos) by using tools such as Topsy.com, which will monitor and email you relevant mentions. Blogs such as Public Address, Kiwiblog and Whale Oil are harder to monitor but often carry relevant material. Tracking mentions of things you're interested in lets you decide how to participate.

“News is free. You can talk to and influence New Zealanders through the news media.”

Magazines

New Zealand has a range of magazines with different audiences.

They include:

- The Listener
- Weekly titles such as the New Zealand Woman's Weekly, Woman's Day, New Idea and That's Life
- Mana magazine
- Metro, North and South
- Next, Mindfood
- Spasifik
- Publications for teens such as Girlfriend and Creme.

There are also many ethnic and special interest magazines covering topics such as business, sport, travel, food and health, gardening, hobbies, gay issues, interior design and families. Many business sectors and organisations publish their own magazines, newspapers or newsletters.

Magazines have a long life and may sit around for months in homes and waiting rooms.

Tracking coverage

Set up news alerts at www.google.com/alerts so relevant stories are emailed to you. This enables you to follow media coverage of an issue that interests you, and track a story and your organisation's reputation so you can decide how to participate.

Get to know your local media. Look for reporters' names on stories you like. Developing relationships with reporters is invaluable. Invite reporters to your meetings, send them your newsletters and tell them about events you are part of such as annual appeals, prize-givings or visits by experts. Once they know you and what you do, they'll come to you for information and comment.

Your media contacts

Keep all your media contacts and information in one place. List your local media in this chart.

It's also a good idea to set up an email list in your contacts so you can email media releases out to all your local media instantly.

<p>Daily Newspaper</p> <p>Deadlines</p> <p>Publication time</p> <p>Editor</p> <p>Chief reporter</p> <p>News desk phone number</p> <p>News desk email</p> <p>Community Newspaper</p> <p>Deadlines</p> <p>Publication</p> <p>Day of the week</p> <p>Editor</p> <p>Reporter</p> <p>Phone number</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Community Newspaper</p> <p>Deadlines</p> <p>Publication</p> <p>Day of the week</p> <p>Editor</p> <p>Reporter</p> <p>Phone number</p> <p>Email</p>	<p>Radio New Zealand</p> <p>Nearest Newsroom</p> <p>Reporter</p> <p>Phone number</p> <p>Email</p> <p>MediaWorks</p> <p>Nearest newsroom</p> <p>Phone number</p> <p>News desk email</p> <p>Radio Network</p> <p>Nearest newsroom</p> <p>Phone number</p> <p>News desk email</p> <p>Pacific / Māori / Specialist radio</p> <p>Nearest newsroom</p> <p>Phone number</p> <p>News desk email</p> <p>Other media outlet</p> <p>Nearest newsroom</p> <p>Phone number</p> <p>News desk email</p>
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What is news?

The word “news” comes from the word “new” so anything which is new has the potential to be interesting and newsworthy for readers, listeners and viewers. Journalists use the term “news value” to identify what makes a topic or person newsworthy. News values include:

- it’s happening – events, new appointments, premises burnt down
- local significance
- names and actions of important people
- novelty (man bites dog)
- conflict
- human interest/people stories.

You can often identify one or more news values in media stories:

- Paralympian stands for wedding dance (novelty and human interest).
- When love is not enough (literary award happening now).
- King of the table (poker champion visits – happening now).
- Artist finally on trip of lifetime (happening now and human interest).
- Girl power to the fore again for sports awards (happening now).
- Inflatable solution finds favour at Special Olympics (happening now and novelty).
- Disabilities group and DHB sign deal (happening now).

- Brave teenager battles daily pain of arthritis (happening now and human interest).
- Human Rights Commission calls for more Sign Language education (happening now).
- Marlborough riding for disabled seeks volunteers (happening now).

How to get into the news

News outlets need news. They need you to tell them when you are doing or saying something newsworthy.

There are two ways to be part of news stories:

1. Responding to national or local events and news stories such as:
 - a. new research or statistics
 - b. comments by politicians or other prominent people
 - c. events such as a wheelchair user being stuck on a railway line.
2. Creating the news by releasing information such as:
 - a. an increase/decrease in people coming to your agency
 - b. success stories from your programmes (such as winning a prize or sport)
 - c. the results of research or a survey
 - d. new projects, programmes, leaders or events.

When you have news you can:

- phone a reporter or chief reporter with an idea
- send a media release to the media
- write a letter to the editor
- hold a press conference
- let your local newspapers know about a photo opportunity.

You can also email your news to www.scoop.co.nz (email editor@scoop.co.nz) and www.voxy.co.nz (email editor@fuseworksmedia.com). Both of these sites will publish your media release instantly for free. Reporters and other people check these sites for news ideas so make sure your release has words in it that will turn up in their searches (eg your town's name if you want your community newspaper to pick it up). Look at media releases on Voxy and Scoop to give you ideas on writing your own. You can post your news to your own website or Facebook page.

Your job is to make it as easy as possible for the reporter. The chances of a reporter being interested will increase if can connect them with someone directly affected by your issue.

Writing a media release

A media release is the most common way to let the media know about news in your agency. A media release gets the media interested in a story; it does not tell the whole story.

The media release should make your position clear on an issue or topic and provide people and phone numbers for further information. If it interests a reporter, they will phone you for more information and some comments.

News outlets get hundreds of media releases a day, so yours needs to stand out to be noticed. Make it newsy and easy to read, make strong statements and use colourful language. A good media release has:

- a strong subject to grab attention
- a clear simple message
- one point per paragraph
- one page only.

It must include:

- the date
- who you are
- what qualifies you to speak out
- what your organisation does
- mobile phone details (for someone available 24/7 to respond).

Use:

- your key messages
- statistics
- examples
- quotes.

Other ways of getting into the news

A letter to the editor is an expression of opinion by a person or organisation. You can be colourful and opinionated in a letter to the editor. You can use it to compliment, to make a statement on an issue or to recount a personal experience. Keep letters to the editor short, otherwise they'll be shortened by the editor. Most publications give a maximum word count on their letters page. Include your full name and contact details.

As well as the news pages, your story might fit in other areas of the media such as business, arts and entertainment, food and fashion, employment, travel or sport pages, events listings or opinion pages.

Consider opportunities that focus on achievement rather than disability, such as an accountant who has won a prize (business pages), an artist who is putting on an exhibition (events or arts pages) or a scientist who has published a paper (science pages).

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Interviews

Dos and don'ts for interviews:

Do:

- Always respond to the reporter promptly or they'll call someone else. Become their go-to person on the issues on which you are the expert.
- Know what you are going to say. Practice with a colleague, don't be hurried by the reporter, take 10 minutes to prepare.
- Have a refusal ready such as "I'm sorry, I don't have the information to answer that question" if you don't want to answer a question.
- Be prepared to explain your terminology in a positive way (consider having a glossary of terms ready).
- Know and respect deadlines. It's difficult for them to use information they receive right on the deadline; by tomorrow it will be out of date.
- Let the reporter know your communications preferences, such as if you need to use an interpreter.

Don't:

- Go off the record. This is when you give information to the reporter on the understanding they won't use it.
- Lie.
- Give an interview if you've been drinking.
- Comment on other organisations or people. Speak for your own organisation only.

Tips for an interview

Being interviewed by a reporter, whether it is for radio, television or a newspaper article, takes us out of our comfort zone. Being prepared is essential.

Before the interview

Here is a checklist to ensure you go in to the interview as prepared as possible. When the reporter calls ask:

- What news organisation are they from?
- If it is radio, is the interview live or pre-recorded?
- What news programme or section of the news is it for?
- What issues does the reporter want to discuss?
- Who else have they spoken to?
- Why are they ringing you today?
- What is the deadline?

If you are happy to be interviewed, always take at least 10 minutes to prepare – tell the reporter you are happy to speak and you will be available in 10 minutes.

Always follow your organisation's media policy.

Clarify what you want to say. Prepare your key messages and practise them.

Imagine the worst question the reporter could ask you and have an answer ready.

Negotiating your interview

If a reporter would like to interview you, you can discuss how it will work.

Always ask the journalist when their deadline is. Many journalists have tight deadlines and need a prompt comment. If it takes time for you to organise a Sign Language interpreter they might decide not to do the interview, or to go to another person or organisation.

The best way to prevent this is to plan ahead and have another spokesperson available who can comment on your organisation's behalf.

Offer to email the journalist a couple of high-quality head and shoulders photos of your spokesperson.

Newspapers and magazines

You can ask the reporter if they will email questions for you to answer. This method is good for spokespeople who are Deaf, hard of hearing, have difficulty speaking clearly or need more time to think about an answer. A bonus: A written response is more difficult to use out of context or misquote.

If the reporter wants to do a face-to-face interview with a Deaf spokesperson, it is best to use a Sign Language interpreter. If it takes a few hours or longer to organise an interpreter, explain why this is the case. Because of deadlines, this might not work for the reporter.

Radio

In some cases radio reporters are happy for you to send them a written statement that is read on-air. If the reporter wants to record an interview, and you use a Sign Language interpreter, ensure they understand there will be a delay between questions and answers. If it is a pre-recorded interview the journalist can, in some cases, edit out the silences. Be aware that a gap with no sound does not work well on radio.

Encourage the announcer/ reporter to explain on-air that the comment is from a Deaf person and translated through a Sign Language interpreter. A good journalist should do this anyway. They do not need to quote the interpreter's name as it could detract from the spokesperson.

TV

A written statement is also an option here. However, having an interview through a Sign Language interpreter can work well on TV. This also gives viewers a chance to see a Deaf person communicating through signing, which is positive.

You might get a choice of live or pre-recorded interview for TV or radio. Choose pre-recorded.

Understanding spokespeople

If the reporter thinks it will be hard for listeners or viewers to understand a spokesperson, you can ask if the reporter will email questions to answer.

However, a pre-recorded face-to-face interview may work on TV where viewers can see the person and read their body language and expressions. You might like to take a colleague who easily understands your spokesperson.

Often TV needs background footage of the office or working environment etc. so the journalist and cameraperson might visit first and then decide if the spokesperson can be understood on camera. If not, the journalist will still have footage to use in the story and they can use written statements on screen. Don't be offended if they say the spokesperson is too difficult to understand; often short comments are used so viewers can miss what was said.

During the interview

- Remember you are being interviewed because you are the expert.
- Remember who your audience is – local or national, specialised or general.
- Aim for responses between 10 and 20 seconds.
- Avoid using YES or NO.
- Avoid using jargon (“We need to integrate the twin-track approach into everyday work”).
- Brand your organisation by using its name.
- Pause and think before you speak.
- Stop talking when you are finished.
- Use colourful and interesting language.
- Give facts, lists and examples.
- If the reporter does not cover the points you want to make, add them at the end.

“Together, we can use the media to help create an inclusive society that enables us to be the best we can be.”

Take control of the interview

You will hear politicians using “bridging phrases” to move from a reporter’s question to a key message. Examples of bridging phrases are:

- The important thing to remember is...
- Let me put all this in perspective by saying...
- Let me just add that...
- Let me point out that...
- Another thing to remember is...
- The real issue here is...
- What we recommend is...

You can use this technique to get your own messages across. Practise (on colleagues or friends!) until you find phrases that work for you.

After the interview

- When the story runs, ring the reporter if there are any factual mistakes so they are not repeated in future stories.
- Keep in touch with the reporter. You could contact them again with your story ideas and add them to your newsletter mailing list.

Photographs and video

Your story will have more impact if it has images. You can influence photographers (and camera operators) to be aware of the dignity of their subjects. Encourage them to show the person in a positive way and avoid shooting from odd angles that emphasise a disability.

For example, in a story about a bowls champion, suggest a photo at a bowling green with the person holding bowls.

If at first you don't succeed...

Don't give up if you don't succeed at first. Hundreds of stories are pitched to reporters every day. Consider a different approach next time. Don't take a refusal personally.