

Guidelines For Media Relations

1. Understanding the News Media

Before approaching any news media to promote Therapeutic Recreation Awareness Month in your community, ask yourself the following questions:

- What is your goal?
- What message(s) must be developed in order to influence your desired target audience?
- What role will the community play?
- What media would be most effective for accomplishing your goal?

A reporter is more likely to report your story if it is unique and has a human-interest component.

2. Types of News Media

a. Radio

- Coverage can take several forms: a news item, a talk show interview, a live remote, or a Public Service Announcement
- Be aware of specific deadlines for submitting your information to ensure your message is heard

b. Newspaper

- Provide in-depth treatment of a subject and use direct quotes from the news release
- Call newspapers and/or email other media outlets ahead of time to tell them that you are sending something newsworthy
- Realize that major news events may take precedence over Therapeutic Recreation Awareness Month
- Provide a sample photo of TR services or interesting adaptive equipment

c. Television

- Visually portrays the importance of your message in 30-60 second segments

- If you want television coverage, find a setting that is visually appealing or focuses on engaging activities
- Many local networks feature 'community bulletin boards' that will post non-profit events
- Contact your local cable company to see if they are available to profile your events

d. Internet

- Post information about Therapeutic Recreation Awareness Month on your facility's website and ensure that the information is accurate and up-to-date
- Post Frequently Asked Questions regarding recreation, leisure activities and the role of therapeutic recreationists in various settings

3. Before Promoting Therapeutic Recreation Awareness Month

Develop a media contact list so that you know which media have been targeted to cover your stories. This list can be updated regularly and used for future stories. The media contact list should include the following information; name of the media contact person, organization, telephone number, and e-mail address.

4. Preparing the News Release

In the first paragraph be sure to answer the following questions:

- WHO is involved?
- WHAT is happening?
- WHEN is it happening?
- WHERE is it happening?
- WHY is it happening?

In the second and third paragraphs provide colourful quotes that the reporter may use in the article.

A news release should be between one to two pages in length. See our sample press release for more details.

5. Day of the Event

Designate an individual to meet the reporter when he or she arrives and have that individual introduce the reporter to the person or people being interviewed.

6. When Being Interviewed, REMEMBER...

- Be prepared with a script that contains all of the key messages
- Repeat your message(s) as often as possible
- Keep your statements short and use everyday language
- Maintain eye contact and attempt to connect on a personal level
- Be honest, always tell the truth

7. After the Event

Write a follow-up article for community or agency publications and include a photo from your event.

8. Share your highlights

Make sure to share your media coverage with your network so it might be amplified! Tag TRO's social media ([@TR_ONTARIO](#), [TROntario](#), [trontario](#)) so we can re-share it!