

# Preparing a Client for a Media Interview

Use these questions to prepare consumers, clients, or tenants for a media interview.

1. What personal strengths and successes would you like to share with the reporter?
2. Do you want to use your full name? First name only? Anonymous?
3. Are you willing to be photographed?
4. Do you have any outstanding warrants? Do you have any other legal reasons you may not want your whereabouts known (e.g. child support collection, debt collection agencies, etc.)?
  - a. If you do, you should not be interviewed.
5. Do you have any safety reasons that you may not want your whereabouts known (e.g. domestic violence, child custody issues)?
  - a. If you do, you should not use your full name, nor have your photograph taken.
6. Do you have children?
  - a. Have you talked with them about the interview?
  - b. Are they willing for you to talk about them?
  - c. Are they willing to be photographed?
  - d. Is there any reason that you may not want to have your children identified (e.g. custody fight, domestic violence, outstanding warrant, etc.)?
  - e. Note: this is particularly tough for middle and high school students who may be embarrassed by this being known.
7. Do you have an employer or family member who might be uncomfortable with you disclosing your situation?
  - a. If so, you should not use your full name, nor have your photograph taken.
8. Do you have things that you want to keep personal from the reporter?
  - a. Examples: history of mental illness, depression, domestic violence, child abuse, etc.
  - b. You do not have to talk to the reporter about any of your personal issues.
9. Are you in recovery?
  - a. Have you talked this over with your counselor, sponsor, or other professional?
  - b. Have you decided what you want to disclose/not disclose?
  - c. Note: you do not have to disclose anything about your prior alcohol/drug use or your recovery. You should be very careful and think through how this disclosure will appear in paper/TV. Sometimes folks in recovery are very willing to talk about their use/recovery since they do it so frequently/openly at 12 step meetings.
  - d. Note: sometimes getting a lot of positive attention can be a trigger for use. Be very careful and have a plan about how you will handle.
10. Have you been interviewed before? How are you feeling about this?
  - a. If you would like someone to be with you, we can arrange that. It will be helpful for that person to know what is "off-limits" and can help keep the reporter away from that topic.
  - b. Generally, the reporter will not try to make you look "bad" in fact they are usually very nice and very respectful. If you say something that you did not mean to say, you could always ask them not to use that, and they will respect that request.
11. Are you willing to sign a media release with our agency so that we can use your story in our publications (i.e. newsletter, annual report, press release, etc.)?
  - a. Note: this release allows the agency to use interviews for other promotional/educational purposes, but we have no liability if there are consequences (i.e. arrest for open warrants or other things beyond control of agency).
12. Do you have any questions?

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