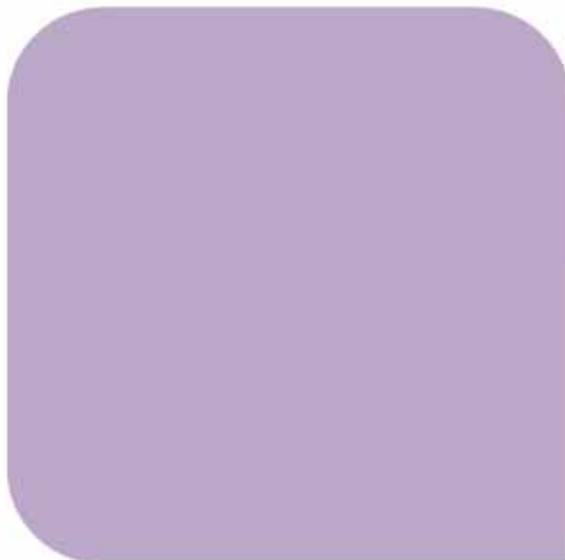
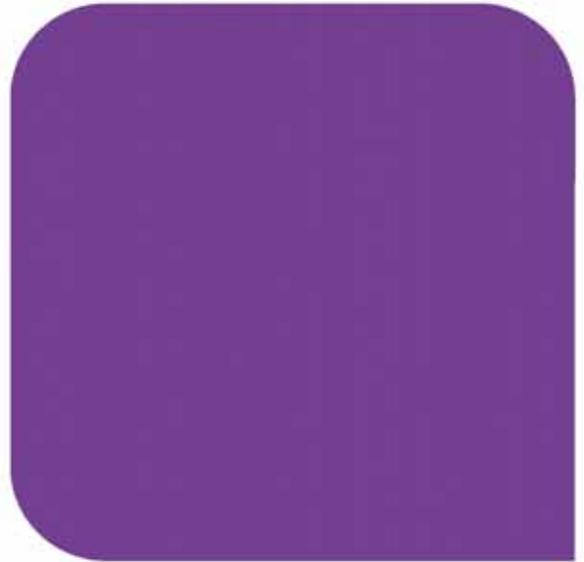


It's my story: helping care experienced young people to give effective media interviews



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It's my story: helping care experienced young people to give effective media interviews

Henrietta Bond

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Written by Henrietta Bond

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This report is available online
www.scie.org.uk

Social Care Institute for Excellence

Goldings House
2 Hay's Lane
London SE1 2H
tel 020 7089 6840
fax 020 7089 6841
textphone 020 7089 6893
www.scie.org.uk

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Introduction

Young people who have been in care have a lot to teach society about the way the care system should be run. Unless we encourage and support them to speak out for themselves, we are denying them opportunities to influence the way journalists represent issues that matter to them. The media can be a powerful tool to help them do this – so it is important that we do everything we can to prepare and empower young people who **choose** to give interviews to the media, to get the best out of doing this.

Who is this for?

This resource is written for workers who want to prepare and support young people to make the most out of their contact with the media, whether local or national, when talking about their experiences in care. It will also be useful to workers in any organisation wanting to empower marginalised or disenfranchised groups.

What do we mean by 'media'?

There is often confusion about what is meant by 'media' because this word has such a broad context. Roughly speaking, 'media' covers any medium we use to communicate with the public, such as radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs and social networking. But in the context of this resource the term is being used to mean journalists and people who work for those publications, programmes and websites.

NB: If you advertise a course on media training you may find that young people come along wanting to find out how to make videos or set up their own radio station! So you need to be clear that you are talking about giving interviews to journalists.

How to use this resource

The material provided here will enable workers to provide an opportunity for young people to:

- explore ideas about media values
- learn more about how the media works
- learn how to present an argument effectively
- discover ways to feel more in control in interview situations
- experience a safe opportunity to test out whether they want to give interviews.

This resource focuses particularly on developing skills for radio and television interviews, because this is the area in which young people and other marginalised groups often feel most disempowered, but these skills are also transferable for giving interviews to print media – newspapers, newsletters, magazines – and their online equivalents.

It comprises:

- preparation for workers wanting to deliver media training
- training materials to use with young people
- handouts to give to young people
- sources of further useful information.

The background

Assumptions are often made that young people are, or have been, in the care system through their own fault, or are bound to have difficult or anti-social behaviour. This resource was commissioned by SCIE to help address some of the media's negative stereotyping of such disadvantaged and disempowered groups.

One of the key aims of this resource is to give members of those groups an opportunity to speak out about the issues that affect them. These young people have a significant role to play in shaping the way services are delivered to children and young people in the public care system – so it is important that they can speak out about issues that matter to them, unimpeded by negative perceptions.

How it was developed

This particular training resource has been developed on behalf of SCIE by Henrietta Bond, an experienced media trainer who specialises in issues affecting looked-after children and young people, with assistance from Brenden Keane, a young people's involvement worker once in care himself, who provided the filming and technical support for this project.

This resource draws upon a range of training courses and materials developed by Henrietta Bond to help people in the not-for-profit sector communicate their messages via the media. It also draws on information and some visual and audio examples from two training days for care-experienced young people, which Henrietta Bond and Brenden Keane delivered and filmed in early 2008. These training days were organised and funded by SCIE and took place in London (for young people from A National Voice) and in Cardiff (for Voices from Care Cymru).

Help with editing the resource was also provided by Ian Peacock, managing director of The Talk Consultancy.

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Thank you to all the young people who took part in the training and to the following organisations that have contributed to the development of this resource:

A National Voice
Voices from Care Cymru

Preparing to deliver media training

This section provides background information to help you prepare to deliver media training to young people who have experienced being in care, so they can use their stories most effectively with the media.

It is presented in three sections:

Why encourage young people to give interviews?

Brush up your knowledge of the media

Some myths about the media

Why encourage young people to give interviews?

'Local people were up in arms about this project for care leavers ... they started saying it would bring down house prices and all that stuff. I got in touch with my local paper and told them I was a care leaver and I wanted to put [across] our side of things ... I did this interview and then the local radio got in touch, and I also appeared on TV ... The media can be very powerful.'

The media has a very direct influence on our lives. We know about issues, people and situations we would never encounter unless we saw them on our television screens or read about them in magazines or newspapers.

For young people growing up in the 21st century, the media is an intrinsic part of their lives. They are used to having instant access to information – through mobile phones, iPods and laptops. Programmes such as Channel 4's 'Big Brother' and the plethora of 'real-life' documentaries blurs boundaries between daily life and the world of television. Young people may feel more connected to the lives of celebrities or soap stars they have never met than to the communities they live in. They see people plucked from obscurity and turned into stars overnight, and may want a slice of that action for themselves. Their politics, cultural references, fashion and music tastes, their concerns about the environment, battery farming or debt in the developing world are all shaped by what they listen to, watch or read.

Your role as a worker

Becoming part of that influential media instrument can be very tempting for a young person who has previously felt overlooked or unheeded. As a worker it is therefore your role to ensure that young people who give interviews about experiences relating to their own lives do so:

- having made an informed choice after considering the full implications
- feeling well prepared and clear about the reasons they are giving the interview and the issues they want to get across
- feeling in control of their personal information and clear about what they are prepared or not prepared to share with the interviewer.

As individuals we may not particularly like the way some sections of the media operate or, for example, the values expressed in the tabloids. But unless we are prepared to engage with the media we stand little chance of changing the way it covers certain issues.

[see clip in online guide]

In this clip from an interview exercise, Joanne demonstrates very clearly how powerful young people's voices can be in challenging stereotypes. (From media training with Voices from Care Cymru, commissioned by SCIE.)

Like it or loathe it, you can't escape the fact that television has a major impact on our lives!

It is estimated that around 25 million households in the UK own a television. Given that the UK has a total population of approximately 60 million and most households have two or more people living in them, it is probably safe to conclude that a very high percentage of the population has access to a television.

What can an interview achieve?

There are a number of reasons why an organisation might choose to give an interview, for example:

- to highlight important issues
- to give their response to a news story
- to publicise new developments, services or research
- to challenge or endorse changes to legislation
- to correct misunderstandings or challenge stereotypes
- to encourage funders, volunteers and other supporters
- to create a positive relationship with a journalist or programme which is likely to be beneficial for the future.

An individual might choose to give an interview about their personal experience for all of the above reasons but also ...

- to feel more in control of their own lives by using their personal information in ways they choose and for reasons they choose
- to feel validated by the knowledge that thousands of people will be listening to their point of view.

We should not expect young people to give interviews simply because we think it will be helpful for our organisation. We need to ensure that, when they do so, they gain something beneficial from the experience. This might range from a sense of personal achievement or growth in confidence to the knowledge that they have contributed in making a difference to the lives of others.

So in preparing young people for specific interview opportunities it is important to be clear:

- why my organisation feels this is something worth doing
- why I am asking a particular young person/group of young people to consider giving this interview
- what I believe this interview will achieve
- what I believe the young people will get from this experience
- what my organisation or the issue/campaign will get from this.

[see clip in online guide]

In this example, Craig takes control of the negative assumptions in the interviewer's question and calmly rebuts them. (From media training with Voices from Care Cymru, commissioned by SCIE,)

'You live your life in a certain way with these views about what's right and wrong and all that ... you find yourself saying stuff about the young generation, "we was never allowed to do that when we were their age" ... but then one day you hear some kid talking about growing up with no one who gives a damn about them, and you think no wonder they do the things they do ... you see it in a whole new light.'

Using your judgement

You will sometimes need to use your judgement about whether a young person's motivation is too weighted towards a particular personal agenda to bring real benefits to themselves and your organisation. Giving interviews can certainly have some therapeutic qualities (because it is empowering and allows the young person to reflect on their experiences), but this doesn't mean that an interview should ever become a public therapy session!

So consider whether there is a healthy balance of motivation in any situation before you encourage a young person to give a particular interview.

In weighing up this balance be aware that very few people are totally altruistic. A young person who is keen to represent your organisation and speak out about the problems experienced by young people coming into the care system is also likely to have a personal issue which motivates them. For example, they may still remember the person who said: 'Young people in care never make anything of their lives', and be keen to prove that person wrong by demonstrating their personal achievements.

It is probably safe to say that many of us are motivated by the desire to succeed in the face of other people's negative beliefs and so long as it remains an underlying factor – and not an overriding obsession – it is probably healthy enough.

These issues are relevant to any organisation which works with marginalised or disenfranchised groups of adults or young people.

Watch out for the overriding personal agenda

Arguing from a personal perspective can be very powerful and usually adds extra weight to an argument. However, there may be a few times when you feel that the balance of motivations is too heavily weighted towards the young person's desire to get back at an individual or institution they hold responsible for a real or perceived injustice. This strong desire to give an interview **solely** to air a personal injustice may be damaging to the young person for a number of reasons:

- the young person may not have thought through the impact of revealing these details so publicly
- the young person may not recognise that relatives and workers are likely to see the interview
- it is illegal for journalists to broadcast allegations of abuse or serious malpractice which have not been upheld by a court – so there is a risk that sections, or the whole, of the interview will be cut, which will leave the young person feeling very disillusioned.

You will need to use your discretion and professional knowledge to decide how best to handle these situations. However, it is probably best to discourage a young person from giving an interview until they are able to create some sense of distance from the issues. In the meantime, encourage them to access other opportunities to address their grievance, for example, contacting a counselling or advocacy service.

Speaking out about serious abuse

We do need to recognise that there may be times when a young person or adult will find it beneficial to speak out about abuses they have experienced – for example when an abuser has been sentenced or when wide-scale abuse has been uncovered. These situations need very careful handling and it is advisable that someone only speaks to the media about these situations after they have received counselling and support and have had a chance to think very carefully about the implications of doing so. Often people choose to have their identities disguised in these situations.

Be prepared – but not over-cautious

It is likely that you may never come across these complex and highly sensitive situations, but in order to feel that you are able to support and safeguard young people properly if they are giving interviews to the media, you need to think about how you would handle them.

Brush up your knowledge of the media

You probably know a lot more about the media than you think. If you watch television or listen to the radio then you are regularly listening to people giving interviews. As a 'consumer' of these interviews you no doubt form opinions of the content, style of interview and the personality of the interviewer and interviewee. You probably do this on a fairly subconscious level most of the time – although there are some times when a pushy interviewer or a very evasive interviewee makes you more aware of the process.

To prepare for training young people to give more effective interviews, it can be very helpful to start listening to all interviews in a new way. Do this with a range of interviews – not just the heavy-end political interviews (although there is a lot to be learnt from these about techniques). Listen as well to local radio interviews and interviews on television where a specialist, academic, sports person, celebrity or member of the public is being interviewed.

Whenever you hear someone being interviewed, ask yourself some of the following questions:

About the interview generally

- What is the purpose of this interview: for entertainment, to convey factual information, to put across a strong political argument, to convey powerful emotions ...?
- What is the 'pace' of this interview – in other words, are the people involved speaking fairly fast and in a punchy manner, or is the feel more laid back, with people speaking more slowly?
- What are the key points being made? Ask yourself: how might I explain these to someone in a text?

About the interviewee

- What's my general impression of the person being interviewed?
- Do I warm to this person or find myself indifferent, or even slightly repelled by them?
- How much of my response is based on the person's argument and opinions? And how much is based on aspects of their personality such as the tone of their voice, the clothes they are wearing or their body language?
- What techniques – if any – is this person using to get me on their side?
- How well do I think this person is responding to the questions that are being put to them?
- How much is the person actually answering the questions posed by the interviewer?
- How in control of their argument does this person seem?
- If I were in this person's shoes would I do something differently?

About the interviewer

- What angle is the interviewer approaching this from?
- What do I think they are trying to get from this interview – answers to key questions? Interesting, entertaining or emotional responses?
- How does the interviewer pursue their aim? Are they pushy or confrontational to get answers from politicians, friendly and encouraging to help a nervous charity representative get their point across, relaxed and jokey to establish a bit of banter?
- Has the interviewer chosen the best style to get the most out of the interviewee from the audience's point of view?
- Do I feel more or less sympathetic to the person being interviewed – or their point of view – because of the way the interviewer has behaved?

Key information about the media

In the accompanying training materials there are some exercises that will help young people to think about this topic. To be several steps ahead of them, so you feel more comfortable in answering questions, it is helpful to brush up on some key facts about the media. First some terms:

- **Broadcast media** is the term used for television and radio.
- **Print media** is the term used for newspapers, magazines and newsletters.
- **Tabloid** is used to describe the smaller size newspapers that traditionally contain more scandal, celebrity news, sports and personal stories. These include 'The Sun', 'The Mirror' and 'The Mail'. (You may also hear the term 'red tops', which refers to the more extreme of these, because they have their front page heading in red, for example 'The Sun')
- The term 'tabloids' is also sometimes used to describe television channels or programmes which focus on scandal, celebrities and so on.
- **Broadsheet** is generally used to describe the more serious newspapers, which contain more world news, in-depth political issues and comment. (The term refers to the traditional larger size of these papers, but some broadsheets are now also produced in smaller formats, similar to tabloids, so size is no longer the determining factor.)
- **New media** refers to websites, chat rooms, blogs and 'social networking' (Bebo, MySpace, Facebook, for example).
- Together with websites, **blogs** (online columns) and **podcasts** (downloadable audio programmes) are becoming widespread and you may find that some specialist social care magazines and newspapers offer opportunities for young people to express their views online.
- **National media** – television, radio and newspapers – covers stories that are considered to be of national interest, even if they relate to local events. (You will often also hear the term **network coverage** relating to radio and TV: this means UK-wide, where 'national' is used to mean a specific country within the UK.)
- **Local newspapers and local radio** cover stories of interest to local people. They always look for a local angle on a national story and want to interview people who live or work in the city, town or village they cover.

- **Regional television** covers issues relating to the region its broadcasts cover. At the end of national news you often hear the newsreader say something like: 'And now over to the news where you live' and it switches over to different presenters in a different, regional studio. Regional does not always mean local, however: see below.

Coverage

- Some stories start at a national level and are then picked up by local media and given a local angle. But some stories start at a local level and are then picked up by national news.
- Regional coverage is determined by transmitters and commercial licences. This may mean that the base and sphere of interest of your regional station may not be very local at all, or that your nearest large town is covered by a different region. Check that an interview on a regional station is going to reach the people you want it to.
- Often with television and radio, the person who researches the story is not the person who does the interview .
- Different media have different news values – generally tabloids and channels like Sky and Channel Five are more interested in celebrities than world news. Radio 4, BBC 2 and broadsheet newspapers are more likely to cover in-depth stories about world news, finance, politics and so on.

The differences between broadcast and print

There are differences between giving interviews to radio, television and print media. Most of the differences are more for the journalist/broadcaster to worry about, than for the person who is being interviewed. Someone who develops the confidence to handle radio and television interviews will feel more comfortable about giving interviews to print journalists, because these are usually considered much less nerve-racking. However, the essential differences are:

With radio and television interviews, tone of voice, body posture and body language are always important. If someone is frowning or slumped in their chair this will come across to the viewers – whether or not they can see the person. You can hear someone 'smiling' on the radio. So for interviews for radio and television it is important that you help the young person to think about how they will come across. Their presentation may be as important as the actual messages they give. A great message can be damaged if the person who is giving it looks shifty and mumbles. Equally a rather dull message can sound interesting if it is delivered with enthusiasm. An interviewee can help get a message across by looking or sounding confident, warm and approachable, and not so nervous or hostile that the viewer/listener switches off to what they are saying.

Timing is also key with radio and television interviews. Most interviews, whether live or pre-recorded, are quite short, often only a couple of minutes long. (Even if the journalist has spent 20 minutes interviewing someone they

will probably still only use a very small portion of the final interview.) So it is important that the person who gives a radio or TV interview is able to make their point clearly and concisely

Although there are many similarities between what makes a good radio or TV interviewee, some people seem to be naturally better at TV than radio and vice versa. This is probably because some people feel more/less comfortable in front of a camera. Also, some people may also have expressive faces but less expressive voices, which means they work fine on TV but are not so good for radio. Sometimes there seems to be no clear reason – a person who struggles with radio interviews suddenly blossoms on camera, and nobody is sure why. But these things are hard to predict without giving someone the experience to find out what suits them best.

In print what the person says is more important than the way they say it. So, someone who takes time to 'warm up' in an interview situation or is less confident about speaking on air may be more comfortable giving an interview to a journalist. Some people are great at explaining things over the telephone or face-to-face but put them on air and they are very ill at ease. Many organisations have specialists who give great interviews to print journalists but never appear on radio or TV.

Never assume that just because a young person is good at speaking to print journalists that they will necessarily enjoy or be good at giving interviews to broadcast media. The other way round is usually safer, because if someone can speak calmly and succinctly on TV or radio, they will probably be fine talking to a journalist over the phone.

(It is worth remembering that although young people are often more anxious about giving interviews to broadcast journalists, they actually have more control in a live TV or radio interview than in an interview with a print journalist. When you are live on air nobody can edit what you say, but print journalists have to select a few sentences from a much longer interview.)

Whatever type of interview a young person is giving, the key to a good interview is always good preparation.

News and features

- A story about hostages being released is News. A story about how the hostages' families have coped with their absence is likely to be Features.
- Features is the term used for more in-depth coverage of issues. Features may relate to a current news story or they may be about something more timeless. (Sunday supplements are full of features – in-depth articles about what it is like to live in a country a decade after the war ended, an exploration of a fascinating murder or political mystery from 50 years ago that has never been solved.)

- Newspapers and magazines often have separate News and Features departments and if you phone them they will often ask you: 'Do you want News or Features?'
- In television and radio the distinction isn't quite so clear to the outsider. But, for example, documentaries can be considered to be features, as can daily chat shows which do interviews about a range of topics that don't necessarily relate to the big news story of the day.
- News is immediate – it changes all the time as old news stories are replaced by new news stories.
- 'Breaking stories' are the freshest, newest news – you usually find them on the front page of the paper, in the news headlines or running across the bottom of your television screen in a 'ticker'.
- News staff work to incredibly tight deadlines – they are frequently expected to cover lots of different stories in one day and they often don't have time to get a great deal of detail about a story.
- Journalists working on news programmes need to speak to people straight away – tomorrow is usually too late.
- Staff who work on news are usually found on the news desk rather than in any other department of a television or radio station or newspaper office.
- Sometimes very big stories and 'breaking news' push out other stories – the 9/11 story, Princess Diana's death, the invasion of Iraq, took over almost all of the news channels and newspaper pages, and many smaller stories already written or filmed were dropped as a result.

Get some first-hand experience

If you have the opportunity to visit your local radio or TV station then take it! You can learn a lot about how journalists work from watching a station in action. For example, you will see the pressure journalists work under to keep everything running to time and you will probably be surprised at how small and under-staffed many local radio stations are.

A visit to your local newspaper may also be useful but it won't be quite so exciting – and they may be too short-staffed to agree to this. Many local newspapers are run by just a handful of people using freelance photographers. If your local newspaper tells you they are too busy to speak to you or attend your event, they are probably telling the truth!

Get a real journalist involved

If you are able to invite a journalist from a local station along to talk to and interview the young people you work with, or even to do some interview practice with the young people, that will offer a valuable opportunity. Young people will see that journalists don't have two heads. Also, interviewing for TV and radio is a skill and not everyone has a natural flair for this. A trained media professional will be able to provide a more realistic and probably more supportive experience for the young people. A trained interviewer is also in a better position to give helpful feedback and tips about getting their point of view across.

Some myths about the media

The following myths underpin many of our concerns about working with the media. You will probably be asked questions about these issues when you are helping young people to prepare for media interviews. So it's useful to know what really lies behind these myths in order to give young people a balanced and accurate picture.

Journalists misquote you on purpose Most journalists are trying to represent stories as accurately as possible. They are seldom specialists in the issues they cover and they rely on the people they interview to put information across clearly. As human beings we don't always get our point across very well and the journalist trying to make sense of what we are saying may be confused, or misunderstand our point. We can help them by trying to get our points across as clearly as possible and repeating key points several times.

Journalists deliberately edit out all your best bits Journalists work within very tight boundaries. A researcher may spend several days interviewing 20 people for a 15-minute radio programme, for example, or a journalist may interview someone over the phone for 10 minutes for approximately a 50-word quote in a 500-word article.

Journalists usually have to work within detailed guidelines laid down by their editor, including what issues to cover, who to speak to and so on. They then have to select which bits of the pre-recorded interviews they believe will make the most interesting and lively listening or viewing. Or they may have to include many different people in one article and need to choose a variety of different points of view. You may have made a very good point but this point may also have been made by someone else – so the journalist won't want to repeat this but may decide to use something else you have said instead. (Very clever interviewees repeat their main point over and over again in lots of different ways to increase the chance of this being used.)

It's best to do a pre-recorded interview rather than a live one As the above point highlights, all pre-recorded interviews are likely to be edited in some way. So if there is a choice, always go for the live interview.

Journalists are very well paid Apart from a small number of journalists working for the tabloids and some famous TV presenters, most people working in the media – especially local media – earn relatively little compared with other professions. Many people working in the media these days are on very short-term contracts and have little or no job security.

Journalists should always let you see or hear their piece afterwards so you can decide whether it's OK If everyone got to check their interviews before they were published or broadcast then journalists would never be able to put a programme or article together! Just imagine if the 20 people they

interviewed said: 'You have to add in this bit, and you must include a lot more detail on that ...'. The journalist would never be able to fit the piece into a 15-minute slot or keep the article within 800 words!

There is another reason why many journalists won't let you read an article or see a programme before it is edited. If you see the piece and say: 'I want you to change X' and they do this, you will then assume that this is how the piece will appear. But the journalist doesn't make the final decisions – these are made by the editor. The editor may decide to add in some extra detail from a news story which has just broken or make some other form of change. To keep within the time or word limit they must then cut out some other parts of the piece. Many publications and programme makers do not allow journalists to show unfinished pieces to people who have been interviewed because they do not want to imply that a deal or contract has been made.

However, it's always worth asking if there is a chance you can see the draft piece, because there may be exceptions to the rule – especially when journalists know they are making programmes or writing articles about very sensitive information.

If you say something is 'off the record' before you say it, the journalist cannot use it 'Off the record' is a convention but it has no legal status. Many journalists do respect the notion of something being off the record, for example, 'I don't want you to mention my sister's name in this interview. Off the record, this isn't for any mysterious reason, but she's been very ill and I don't want people calling her up just because they've seen her name in the paper.'

However, journalists are always looking for a good story so it is foolish to tell an interviewer something fascinating 'off the record', and then expect them not to use it! (Somebody once told a journalist off the record that a famous painting was a fake – and was then surprised when the story made front-page news.)

You own the interview so you can change your mind afterwards Once an interview is given it becomes the property of the person who recorded the interview. This is why it's best to prepare carefully before deciding to give an interview. Of course, if you realise you have made a major mistake or some important change of circumstances has happened, it is always worth contacting the journalist to tell them about this. They may be able to make some changes – but this cannot be guaranteed.

Journalists should always pay young people to give interviews Nobody should be out of pocket for doing an interview. So it is fair, for example, to expect that travel costs will be covered. If on top of this the journalist is able to make a donation towards an organisation, or pay a little over the odds for the interviewee's expenses, that is great. But most journalists don't pay for interviews, for a number of reasons:

- We live in a country with a free press and paying for interviews doesn't sit very well with this. The term 'cheque book journalism' is a derogatory one – for exactly that reason. If you expect interviews to be paid for then only the very well-funded parts of the media will have access to interviewees – and local media, community and voluntary sector media and specialist press will not be able to cover these issues.
- In most cases there is no money allocated to pay for interviews. Local radio and community television stations are often run on a shoestring and some presenters may be volunteers. Even at national level the budgets are often very tight. Journalists who might be paid £200–£300 for a feature that took them five days to put together will not have spare money to pay interviewees – and it's unlikely their editors will have any spare money in their budget to supplement this.
- People tend to give the best interviews when they care passionately about an issue. If you encourage young people to expect a fee every time they give an interview you may find that some young people come forward because they want the fee rather than because they have something interesting to say.

If you are unhappy with the finished programme or article you should never have anything to do with that journalist again The journalist may be unhappy about it too! They may have explained very carefully to the editor how important it was to keep in this quote or use this particular expression, but the editors or sub-editors have changed things.

If you are unhappy with a finished programme or article, it is much better to ring up the journalist and ask nicely about what happened, rather than get angry with them or write a letter of complaint to the editor. If you handle things well, the journalist will probably remember you as a helpful person and will do their best to get things right for you and your organisation next time round. They may be working for a different programme, publication or editor next time and you may find the next piece is much closer to what you hoped for.

Preparing to meet the media

The sections accessible here provide the outline of a course to help young people prepare for media interviews. The slides for each section are reproduced within the section but can also be found within the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Different sections can also be used as stand-alone topics for group discussions.

Introduction to the course

Trainer notes

Slide 1 is a header slide for the course – you may want to devise your own name for this training.

Slide 2 outlines the likely aims of the day – you may want to modify these or add some more options.

- It is important to present any type of interview training as an opportunity for young people to build on existing knowledge of the media. This reminds them that they are consumers of media and know more about it than they probably realise.
- From the start, help young people to feel in control of their personal stories and how they use them – and to understand that they have the power to make changes through the media.
- It is helpful to stress that they will be gaining new skills and developing confidence – and to help them recognise that they already have existing communication skills which this training will build on.
- Interview training can sound quite intimidating, so emphasise that there will be lots of fun elements.
- Help young people recognise that not everybody who undertakes the training will choose to give interviews.

Slide 1 (header slide)

Preparing to meet the media: How to use your personal stories to improve media coverage of care-experienced young people

Slide 2: Aims

- *Understand a bit more about how the media works*
- *Discover how to use your own story to challenge stereotypes and create change*
- *Gain new skills and confidence to give interviews*
- *Get some practice – and have some fun*
- *Decide what YOU want to get out of talking to the media*

How does the media see young people?

Trainer notes

It is a good idea to start any form of training or preparation for giving media interviews by encouraging young people to have a discussion about the way the media represents young people.

Look out for any stories in your local or national press which will help to spark off discussions, for example, stories which depict teenage hoodies as 'demons' and sick, disabled or abducted children as innocent 'angels'. You may also find useful examples on websites such as MySpace.

[see clip in online guide]

This clip shows Annie Goss, SCIE's media manager, talking to a group of young people about the way the media sees young people – but it has an interesting twist!

Slide 3 can be used to help young people focus this discussion.

Slide 3: Your thoughts about the media

- *How do you think the media portrays young people?*
- *Does it use stereotypes? If so – why do you think this is?*
- *How would you like to see the media portray young people?*
- *What can you do to change the way the media portrays young people?*

If you are able to show young people an example of an interview or a news story, you might also want to ask them to think about the questions on Slide 4.

Slide 4: If you have read/watched/listened to a media story about young people ...

- *What did you think about the way the interviewer spoke to or spoke about young people?*
- *If young people were interviewed what did you think about the way they came across?*
- *If you were in the interviewer or the young people's position would you do anything differently? If so, why and how?*

The aims of these exercises

- to engage young people in the issue
- to get them thinking about the media
- to get them thinking about different roles, for example, the interviewer and the interviewee
- to provide motivation for them to consider engaging with the media in order to challenge negative stereotypes.

How the media operates

Trainer notes

All good news stories start by people asking questions. So it can be useful to open this section by getting young people to think about this process by asking them to be interviewers and interviewees.

Exercise

Ask young people to divide into pairs and interview each other, and then feed back that information in the most lively and interesting ways. Use the questions from Slides 5 or create your own questions which you think will be more relevant. Encourage the young people to keep their responses short and punchy.

Slide 5: Interview your partner – and find out

- *Who they are? Where do they come from?*
- *What do they feel about the media?*
- *What are they hoping to get out of today?*
- *Something nobody else in the room knows about them*

Prepare to feed back to the group about them

The aims of these exercises

- to increase young people's understanding of how journalists work
- to de-mystify the media by helping young people realise that journalists are simply people asking questions
- to help young people realise that both the journalist and the interviewee can make choices and take control of the interview
- to help young people recognise that they do not have to be passive in their interactions with the media but can be instrumental in creating change.

Trainer notes

It can be helpful to remind young people that journalists are human beings too! They have their own families, friends, interests and personal issues. Sometimes a journalist is interested in following up a story because it is close to their own heart – for example, an issue that has affected their family or friends. Sometimes journalists are interested in a story because they know nothing about the story and want to find out more.

Although the word 'journalist' is used in many parts of this training as a catch-all expression, there are many different job titles within the media. It can be helpful to mention these different roles because young people may come across different media staff in different situations. A young person may be approached by a researcher for a programme and later interviewed by the presenter for the programme, or several presenters. In a television studio there may be a couple of presenters and quite a large crew of camera operators, sound engineers, lighting people and so on.

Slide 6: Who are 'the media'?

- *Made up of real people (believe it or not!)*
- *Journalists, reporters, broadcasters,*
 - *News readers, presenters, editors, directors, programme makers, researchers etc*
- *Also camera operators, lighting people, sound engineers, make up artists, location scouts, runners etc*

Slide 7 can be used to help young people understand the different types of media. The more comfortable they feel with the basic jargon surrounding the media, the more it de-mystifies the media and the more confident they will feel about giving interviews.

Slide 7: Types of media

- *Broadcast media is TV and radio*
- *Print media is newspaper and mags*
- *New media is websites, chat rooms, blogs and 'social networking' e.g. Bebo, MySpace, Facebook*

This training is about broadcast media. But if you can give a good interview to the broadcast media this will help you give good interviews to other media

What is news?**Trainer notes**

This section of the training is designed to get young people thinking about the elements that make up a news story – elements such as:

- topical
- immediate
- something out of the ordinary. 'Dog bites man' is pretty run of the mill stuff, but 'Man bites dog' is news because it's unexpected
- likely to contain some powerful emotions/conflicts of emotions: fear, hate, love, anger, bravery
- dramatic and original – the first woman to fly around the world was big news. The second or third woman to do this wasn't quite so newsworthy. The fourteenth woman to do this probably doesn't get a mention on national news ...
- affecting people!

There are many definitions of news but Slide 8 can be very useful because it makes the essential (but not always obvious) link between people and the news.

To illustrate this you might want to give some examples, such as:

- A news story about a building falling down is not particularly interesting if you just focus on the destruction of the architecture. As soon as you bring people into the story and include the impact on their lives and how they feel about it, it becomes much more dramatic.
- News stories about animals relate to the context in which those animals exist in our society. Stories about the owner's grief at a kidnapped or lost pet only work in societies where pets are common. In societies where animals are essential to life, news about the death of a herd of goats is more likely to focus on people's distress that they won't be able to feed their families.

Slide 8: What is news?

Harold Evans, who used to be editor of The Times newspaper said:

'News is people. It is people talking and people doing. Committees, cabinets and courts are people; so are fires, accidents and planning decisions. They are only news because they involve and affect people.'

Slide 9 relates to some of the issues covered in **Brush up your knowledge of the media**. Young people don't need a great deal of information about this, but they do need opportunities to realise that:

- journalists often need interviews today – they can't wait until tomorrow
- not all stories get used – and a journalist may be as disappointed as the people they have interviewed when their story is pushed out by a bigger news story. (It is important to stress this point – sometimes, young people will spend a lot of time giving interviews and then find that their interview is not used. On some occasions stories are postponed and used at a later date.)

The bullet point 'Features are the older brothers and sisters of news' is specifically worded to invite questions and generate discussion. You can use it to explain that news is like the excited small child who wants everything now – and is very active about getting it! Features are like more mature teenagers who are more considered and thoughtful. They go into a bit more depth and they often weigh up a number of different points of view quite carefully. But they can be passionate and deliver a punch when they need to!

Slide 9: More about news

- *News is immediate!*
- *We talk about 'breaking news', 'the most up-to-the-minute stories', '24-hour news', 'coming live from the scene', 'happening in front of our eyes'*
- *News journalists work to very tight deadlines*
- *'Features' are the older brothers and sisters of news!*
- *Always find out the journalist's deadline*
- *News 'breaks' all the time so sometimes a bigger story replaces a smaller story*

It can be helpful to take along some local and national newspapers and get young people to spot the news stories and the features. News stories are almost always on the front page and near the front. Features start to appear later in the paper and in supplements.

Looking at newspapers can also help young people to think about some of the elements which make up a feature. For example, in newspaper features the people interviewed are often photographed and more detail is written about them, to help the reader get a more rounded picture of their circumstances. (Although this course is primarily about broadcast media, newspapers are often a more accessible way of demonstrating the **differences** between news and features.)

These discussions should help young people to realise that news journalists and features journalists usually work to different deadlines and may have different requirements.

News values

Trainer notes

This section is designed to help young people realise that different sections of the media have different news values. If possible let them work this out for themselves, by using the following exercise.

Newsworthiness exercise

Ask young people to put these news stories in order of which is most newsworthy and then discuss their reasons.

Slide 10: What's most newsworthy?

- *Britney becomes a nun*
- *My cousin was an alien*
- *The Prime Minister resigns*
- *David Beckham is kidnapped*
- *Alligators make great pets*
- *Winner of 'The X Factor' was my first kiss*
- *The Bank of England burns down*

There are no right answers to this task. However, the task itself should encourage young people to think about the fact that different types of media have different news values. Tabloid television and newspapers may be more interested in stories about Britney Spears and David Beckham, while the BBC, News 24 and broadsheet newspapers may decide that the Bank of England burning down is more interesting than the prime minister resigning (or the other way round).

The other stories listed are more feature stories than news, but 'The X Factor' has a topical element and may be of interest to a local newspaper – or even a

national, if it involves another celebrity. Alligators should probably be the last on anyone's list as this is definitely a features story.

You don't have to agree with media values to use them!

Use Slide 11 to solidify some of the learning that has come from the Newsworthiness exercise. It can be beneficial for young people to realise that you don't have to agree with media values, or particularly like a programme or newspaper, in order to agree to give an interview.

Slide 11: News values

- *Different media have different news values*
- *Generally, Sky News and the tabloids are more interested in celebrities and BBC news and broadsheets are more interested in world events*
- *You might not agree with news values but usually it's easier to work with them than try and change them*
- *If you don't take part you won't be able to say what you think*

Recognising different agendas

Trainer notes

It is helpful at this point to start thinking about what makes an interesting interview. Start by focusing on what makes a good interview – from the point of view of the listener or viewer. This will help young people start to think more about the 'ingredients' a journalist is looking for when they interview someone on radio or television.

If you are able to do so, ask young people to watch or listen to a particular programme in advance so they can discuss this. If possible encourage them to choose a programme themselves where they know there will be lots of different interviews. Encourage them to pick something which has different styles of interviews – some hard news interviews, some local interest interviews and some celebrity interviews. (Local radio stations can be good for this or they might consider something like BBC Breakfast News.) Alternatively, you may also be able to watch some downloaded clips of interviews on the internet.

Try to have a good discussion about this issue before showing Slide 12 – inevitably people come up with lots of different ideas about what makes a good interview and the points on the slide are by no means the definitive guide.

When you show the slide continue to emphasise that this discussion is focusing on the viewer's and listener's point of view. (And journalists are in the business of keeping their listeners happy!)

NB: There are more detailed notes about anecdotes and encouraging listeners to put themselves in someone else's shoes in later sections.

Slide 12: What makes an interview good to watch or listen to?

- *lively, interesting and you want to hear more*
- *sounds natural – like a conversation*
- *people use anecdotes and examples to illustrate the point*
- *encourages the listener to use their own imagination and put themselves in someone else's shoes*
- *the listener learns new information*
- *people talk about it in the pub or at the water cooler*

A lively, interesting interview on television or radio generates lots of discussion afterwards. A dull interview is likely to be quickly forgotten. The journalist has their own agenda in an interview – and a big part of this is keeping the listeners' and viewers' attention.

Why it's important to recognise agendas

Only when young people recognise that there are different agendas will they be able to understand that:

- interviewers ask questions to get interesting responses. There are no wrong or right answers in most situations, just an opportunity for the person being interviewed to express their opinions and – hopefully – keep the audience listening!
- listening to people agree with each other can be dull and you don't learn very much. It's more interesting when people have different points of view
- interviews are very similar to having a discussion with a friend – you won't always agree but you will continue to make your point and try to respect the other person's right to their point of view.

Consolidate this learning with Slide 13.

Slide 13: Your agenda will be different from the journalists'

- *Journalists want stories and interviews that interest their listeners and viewers*
- *Don't expect a journalist to see things from your perspective, because they haven't been in your shoes*
- *See interviews as an opportunity to challenge people's thinking*
- *Arguments are interesting – they don't make people enemies*

Using anecdotes and personal examples

Trainer notes

This section helps young people to think some more about the ingredients for a good interview. It will help them appreciate why journalists ask questions about personal experiences – and why viewers and listeners like to hear about these. It will also help young people start to think about the importance of making choices about the examples and anecdotes they use in interviews.

You will probably find that some young people don't know the word 'anecdote' and will need an explanation of this. It is worth introducing this word, because in an interview someone might ask them if they can give an anecdote from their own experiences. It is better that they become familiar with this expression than risk being thrown by hearing the word for the first time in an unfamiliar setting.

Put quite simply, an anecdote is a short story taken from personal experience, used to illustrate a point. It is a very natural way human beings explain things to one another.

Why it's a great idea to use anecdotes

The way we as human beings connect to other people is through our senses and our emotions – so good anecdotes appeal to our emotions.

For example:

Interviewer: 'So how did you feel when you heard you had received the funding for this project?'

Answer: 'Really pleased.'

This is a pretty dull response but the anecdote below makes the answer more lively and appealing.

Answer: 'I just couldn't believe it when the letter arrived. Anna from the project rang to tell me the news. I was gobsmacked. I kept saying "You've got to be joking". Then I rang my friend to tell her and she was jumping up and down and whooping on the end of the phone – she knew how much this meant to me. After that lots of different people started ringing me – the phone just never stopped with people ringing to say is it true? Have we really got the money, after all this time?'

Selecting a particular incident to illustrate a point brings it alive and helps someone else connect with something they have not directly experienced themselves.

Exercise

Ask young people to think up some anecdotes from their own lives – these can be as light-hearted or as serious as you feel is appropriate at the time. You might suggest topics such as an accident, a first meeting with an important person in their lives, a holiday or outing. Get them to share these in pairs and maybe with the group.

You can then expand on this exercise by getting the group to decide on an issue they feel strongly about – and ask the young people if they have any anecdotes which help to illustrate this. Ask someone to share their anecdote with the group. Then encourage members of the group to ask the person who has told the anecdote some questions, to get an even more detailed

impression of what happened: 'So what exactly did you think when you first met her?' 'What colour was the car and what make?', 'Did you feel more frightened or more surprised?'

[see clip in online guide]

In this excerpt from an exercise on interview practice, Neil uses the powerful anecdote of his friend's death to illustrate his arguments about how the police should control joy-riding. (From media training with Voices from Care Cymru, commissioned by SCIE.)

It's easier to relate to one human being than many

As human beings we are programmed to relate to other people – and we find it easier to connect to the feelings of one person than we do to connect to impersonal facts. If someone tells us that 1,000 people have been stranded on a hillside after their homes were flooded, we may feel a little bit sorry for them. But we cannot relate to 1,000 people – it is just a number! But when we turn on our televisions and see the faces of just a few of those people – the fear and despair in their eyes – we start to feel a sense of connection. We start to put ourselves in their shoes.

This is the reason why journalists want real people and real stories – and why they ask questions such as 'How did you feel about this?'. They want their audiences to be able to connect with the person they are interviewing.

Conflicting demands and hidden agendas

Trainer notes

Young people will start to feel more confident in interview situations if they can get a sense of the demands and distractions of a studio interview, and also learn how to identify their own agenda. Identifying an agenda is simpler than it sounds and The Great British Breakfast exercise can help young people to clarify this.

This exercise is also a good way of getting young people to start doing interviews – but within a fun context. This exercise also provides opportunities for putting into practice some of the learning from the previous section, such as trying out anecdotes and examples to encourage the audience to picture, smell and taste the frying breakfast ...

The Great British Breakfast exercise

This exercise can be tailored and adapted to different cultures. Just keep the focus of the exercise on a very clearly identified dish, such as a fry-up or its equivalent in a particular culinary tradition, one for which everyone will understand the key ingredients.

How to set this up

Split the group into two. Group A are the **interviewees/guests** and Group B are the **interviewers**. (If there are odd numbers you may need to become a part of Group B.)

Send each group to separate rooms, so they cannot overhear each other. Do not brief either of the groups until they are out of earshot of each other. (It is very important that the two groups do not reveal their 'hidden agendas' to each other. Avoid the expression 'hidden agenda' when you brief the groups as it is helpful if the young people discover this through the exercise itself.)

Brief Group B

Tell Group B that they are the morning presenter on a local radio station (you will need to explain that they will each be doing this exercise, so they need to imagine themselves as a multiple personality). The topic for this morning's discussion is the Great British Breakfast and their guest is the local expert on the Great British Breakfast. This person has written books and articles, and appeared on television, cooking fried breakfasts.

However (and this is the 'hidden agenda' for Group B), this morning's programme is being sponsored by the Sausage Corporation. So they will need to get in as many mentions of sausages as possible to keep the sponsors happy. If they do this then they will get an extra £1,000 in their pay cheque this month – if they don't then they might lose their job.

Encourage this group to plan together the sort of questions they want to ask the expert on the Great British Breakfast – while at the same time making sure they get in as many opportunities as possible to mention sausages. Encourage them to think about the ingredients of a great fry-up and how they will make this sound appealing to the listener. Give them about 10–15 minutes to think about this.

Explain to Group B that at the end of the 15 minutes their guest will arrive and they will need to take them to the studio. Then, after an announcement about the traffic news, they will be 'live on air'. They will have four minutes to interview their guest.

Brief group A

Tell Group A that they are experts on the Great British Breakfast (again, it may help to explain that as they will all be doing this exercise they need to think of themselves as a multiple personality). Explain that they have appeared many times on television cooking a proper fry-up. They have also written articles and books about, and are generally well known for their love of crispy-round-the-edge fried eggs, fried bread done to perfection, sizzling bacon and so on
....

Today is the start of British Breakfast Week so they have been invited on to their local radio station to talk about the Great British Breakfast.

However (and this is the 'hidden agenda' for Group A), they have just spent the weekend in Paris and they are now totally obsessed by croissants. This is all they want to talk about – especially as they are now planning a new cookery book called 'A hundred things you can do with a croissant'. And they really are not interested in talking about fried breakfasts any more. But they are smart people and they realise that if they let the radio station know this before the interview starts then they probably won't get a chance to talk about their new passion on the air

Encourage the group to plan the way they will handle the radio interview. What sort of questions do they think the presenter might ask? How will they handle these questions to make sure they are able to talk about croissants as much as possible? Give them about 10–15 minutes to think about this.

What you do while the groups are preparing

It is a good idea to listen in on both groups as they do their preparation, so you can be sure that they have understood the exercise, and so you can offer suggestions if needed. But you also need to prepare the room where Group B is working, to make it into a 'studio'. Group together pairs of chairs facing each other but as far apart from other pairs of chairs as possible, so that people won't overhear each others' interviews too much.

Brief Group B again

Just before you fetch the interviewees from Group A tell the members of Group B that they must each choose a guest and take them to a 'studio' i.e. a pair of chairs. (If you prefer you can decide who will interview whom and tell the interviewer the name of their guest.) They should ask their guest how their journey has been and make them as comfortable as possible.

Explain to your interviewers in Group B that they are all working in the same building and the walls are a bit thin – so they may overhear other interviewers in the same building. Explain also that the technical staff have gone on strike so you have to hold up pieces of paper – or numbers of fingers – to keep them within the four minutes. You will tell them when they have only three, two and one minute left. You will also indicate to them when they have 10 seconds left to wind up the interviews.

Remind them that they must be ready to introduce their guest as soon as the traffic news finishes – and you will give them the cue to do this.

Bring the two groups together

Ask Group A to join Group B in their room and explain that they are now going to the radio station where the presenter will meet them and take them to the 'studio'. Explain that all the interviews will take place simultaneously.

When Group B has taken their guests to the studio (i.e. their pair of chairs) give them about forty seconds to settle into their seats and chat a little. Then stand in the centre of the room, get everyone's attention and say something like this, substituting your own local details for the words in bold:

'And that was the Birdie Song by the Tweets ... a timeless classic and one of my personal favourites ... and now over to our traffic news ... Reports are coming in of a lorry shedding its load of golden syrup on the **southbound** section of the **M31** between junctions **10 and 11**. Police are advising motorists to leave the motorway at junction **9** to avoid a sticky situation. And now back to the studio where today we are celebrating Great British Breakfast Week ...'

At this point you indicate to the interviewers in Group B that they should start their interviews.

Distract the interviewers a little bit

While the interviews are in progress, rush around the room holding up a piece of paper (or a number of fingers) to tell each of the interviewers how many minutes they have left. You might also hold up a piece of paper with the words 'don't forget the sponsors!' so that each of the interviewers can see this. You also 'wind down' the interviews to finish on time. (Don't worry that this means that some of the interviews will last a few seconds longer than the others as you can't be with all the pairs at the same time.)

The aim of these distractions is to help members of Group B realise how many distractions there are for interviewers in the studio. This is a simple way of replicating the fact that, during a studio interview, most interviewers have a producer talking to them throughout the interview via their headphones.

Talk about what has happened

When all the interviews have finished, bring everyone back together. Ask the group:

- What did they notice?
- What was it like being the interviewer/interviewee?
- Which position – if any – felt the more powerful?
- What agendas have they spotted?

Try this exercise out with some colleagues first to make sure you understand how it works. It's a lot simpler to do than to describe!

[see clip in online guide]

An example of the Great Welsh Breakfast exercise and discussion afterwards led by trainer Henrietta Bond. (From media training with Voices from Care Cymru, commissioned by SCIE.)

The aim of this exercise is to help young people recognise that:

- there are always different agendas in any interview
- having a different point of view doesn't make people enemies
- having a lively discussion can be enjoyable
- a good interview is usually a compromise between the interviewee and the journalist
- interviewing can be just as difficult as being interviewed
- when you are clear of your own agenda you feel much more in control!

Deciding on your personal agenda

Trainer notes

Using personal stories with the media can be very powerful in challenging stereotypes and creating change in the public care system. But it is something which a young person needs to consider carefully. In this section of the training you can help young people to think about:

- why they might choose to give interviews about their own experiences
- the issues this might raise for them
- what they might do to stay 'in control' of their personal stories
- what preparation they might need
- any support needs they may have after the interview.

You may find it helpful to use Slide 14 to start this discussion. Explain that these are the sort of questions they will need to ask themselves before they agree to take part in an interview.

Slide 14: Be clear of your agenda

- *Why am I doing this?*
- *What do I want to achieve*
- *What 'evidence' from my own experience do I need to use?*
- *How much personal information am I prepared to share?*
- *How can I protect other people?*
- *What support do I need?*

You will need to help the young people recognise some key issues relating to using examples and information from their own lives.

- Telling your friends how you feel about your family is very different from saying the same thing in front of a large audience of strangers.
- Family and friends may watch the interview and this may affect your relationship with them.
- Interviews may be repeated in the future – long after circumstances have changed (you may have resolved a family argument brought up in the interview, for example, or moved on in other ways).
- If you make allegations about someone, which haven't been upheld in court, then this can be seen as libel. Programmes won't be able to broadcast this or if the programme is live, the journalist may have to say something along the lines of 'Of course, that hasn't been proven in court'. They do this to avoid any risk of being prosecuted for libel. This can be quite upsetting for a young person who feels that the journalist doesn't believe them. So you need to help them understand that the journalist may not doubt their word but the journalist's editor has to make sure the programme avoids the risk of prosecution in all cases of this nature.

Support

What support will you be able to offer to young people who do interviews on behalf of your organisation?

It is normally appropriate to:

- help them prepare for the interview
- accompany them (if feasible and affordable)
- be available after the interview either in person or by phone.

Sometimes people feel rather anxious after giving an interview as they may worry about what they have said, or failed to say, and may need reassurance about this. Try to focus on the positives and encourage them to realise that there is no such thing as the perfect interview – almost everyone wishes afterwards that they had said or done something differently. In normal conversation we make slips of the tongue and don't always phrase things quite the way we would like, but listeners are human beings too and they are used to listening to 'imperfect' human conversations.

[see clip in online guide]

In this excerpt about the closure of family planning clinics for young people, Alma makes a slip of the tongue by using the word 'contraception' instead of 'pregnancy'. She corrects the mistake very naturally, remains calm and goes on to seize the agenda by introducing new information to her argument. (From media training with Voices from Care Cymru, commissioned by SCIE.)

Praise young people for their willingness and courage in doing the interview and their commitment to getting their point across. And remind them that this will have boosted their confidence to take on other challenges in the future. (Obviously if a young person has a really negative experience and feels disempowered by this, then it is important to consider whether to put them forward for other interviews.)

It is always helpful to hear or watch an interview you have given. But don't assume every programme will offer a copy of the interview – if they did this for every guest that took part they would never have enough time to do anything else! (And don't forget, local radio stations are constantly interviewing people from voluntary and community groups and other not-for-profit organisations and causes, so they won't see your organisation as anything exceptional.) If young people want a tape of something which is being broadcast live, they should ask for this before they give the interview (afterwards may be too late as there may be no copies of the programme).

If something is being broadcast in the future then young people (or your organisation) should ask to be notified of when this will be and arrange for several people to tape it – and also ask for a tape from the station.

Journalists sometimes won't remember your request for a tape or copy of an article (they are often very short-staffed and deal with so many different individuals), so you may need to remind them politely.

Protecting identities

This can be a useful time to start thinking about how young people can protect themselves and the identities of other people in their lives, but still use powerful anecdotes and examples to get their points across.

For example, instead of saying:

'When I was in the Lime Tree Children's Home my mate Danny was very upset by ...'

the young person could say:

'When I was in a children's home some of the other young people there were very upset by ...'

Instead of saying:

'My mother was an alcoholic at the time and my dad beat her up, and she never looked after us properly, and social services took us away and my sister Jasmine went to one foster carer, and my brother Dylan went to another, which really broke my heart...'

the young person might choose to say:

'My family was going through a very difficult time and we were taken into care, and I found it heart-breaking being separated from my brother and sister ...'

It is, of course, perfectly OK to say: 'That's something I would rather not talk about' if a question feels too intrusive, but they should always avoid that old cliché 'No comment'.

Err on the side of caution

Explain that it is best to keep information about other people as non-specific as possible. Avoiding naming them is not always enough. They should also avoid the 'jigsaw' identification technique because it is not anonymous, and can be considered to be libel. For example: 'He's this famous local footballer I can't name, but he's seven feet tall and is married to a supermodel and has eleven children ...'

Advise young people not to give out addresses or too much detail about where they live, unless this is intrinsic to the story, such as 'the centre being closed on my street'. It's often best to talk about an area of the city rather than a road name, or a part of the county rather than the name of a small village.

On the other hand, you have to recognise that young people have a right to explain their perception of their situations, especially when it impacts on the way other people perceive them. Your responsibility is to make them aware of the risks and to be cautious about how they do this – and ultimately a journalist must decide if they feel this comes too close to libel.

Preparing for interviews

Trainer notes

There are many techniques to help people get the best out of interviews. Some are given here and there are more in the handout. However, what is most important is to help young people prepare their agenda and the messages they want to get across.

You can use Slide 15 to create a discussion about the following points.

- It is important to identify the key message or messages you want to put across. For example, you might decide that your key message is 'Young people are in care through no fault of their own and should always be treated the same as everyone else.' Having this key message firmly identified gives you something to check against to make sure you are sticking to your agenda in the interview and not being distracted from this by the questions the interviewer is asking.
- Sometimes in interviews the 'right question' never comes up – so don't wait. Be proactive and create your own opportunity to get your message across. (There is more about how to do this in the next section.)
- If you go into an interview hoping that a difficult question doesn't come up this will make you more nervous and less likely to concentrate on what you are talking about. And it won't help you to cope if that question does come up. So it is best to encourage young people to think about any difficult questions that might arise and consider how to handle them.

For example, a young person may be worrying that the interviewer will ask them whether they have ever been evicted from a flat for difficult behaviour, to which they would have to answer 'yes'. It is much better for them to prepare for this, so they might calmly reply: 'Yes, when I was younger this happened to me – sadly it was because I wasn't prepared properly for living on my own and I didn't realise that playing my music so loudly would upset my neighbours. That's why I think it's so important for other young people preparing to leave care to have as much help as possible for living by themselves ... which is why I'm involved in this campaign ...'

- Identifying the type of questions you think the interviewer is likely to ask is always good preparation for any interviewee. Involving someone else is a good idea because they may think of issues you haven't thought about.
- You never need to do an interview straight away. Ask a journalist why they want to interview you, what it will be about, when the piece is likely to go out, whether it will be in a studio or elsewhere and whether there will be any other people interviewed at the same time.

Slide 15: Your preparation

- *Know your own agenda and why you are doing this*
- *Identify one or two key points you want to get across*
- *Prepare examples and anecdotes carefully*

- *Imagine you are the interviewer – what questions do you think the listeners want you to ask?*
- *Think about 'difficult' questions and what you will say or do if the interviewer asks you these*
- *Practise beforehand with a friend or colleague*

Traditionally, people were taught on media training courses to prepare three key messages, but it's usually easier to have one – or at the most, two – key messages.

[see clip in online guide]

In this example Jenny stays very clearly focused on her key messages and isn't afraid to correct negative assumptions made by the interviewer. (From media training with Voices from Care Cymru, commissioned by SCIE.)

Feeling in control during the interview

Trainer notes

Now, on to the interview itself. You may want to show these slides alongside an interview exercise, or before or after it. (**How to practise interviews** includes suggestion topics for interview exercises.) This will depend on how you are structuring the training. On a one-day training course you may want to give young people a chance to try out interviews at different points during the day, rather than only at the end. The slides can then be used to reinforce or develop the experiential learning.

The first point on Slide 16 has already been covered but it is worth reminding young people of the importance of sticking to their agenda (in the way they did during the Great British Breakfast Exercise).

They may choose to answer some questions – or aspects of questions – asked by the interviewer but above all they are there to get their key message(s) across. They should never wait for the right question to come up but introduce their key message at the very first available opportunity.

To do this they may need to use the **ABC technique**. ABC stands for Acknowledge, Bridge and Control.

What this means is:

- You **acknowledge** the interviewer's question: 'That's an interesting issue ...
- You then create a **bridge** to where you really want to go – the word 'but' is often the best way to do this.
- You take **control** by talking about your agenda/key message: '... what I really want to get across is that young people in care should be treated just the same as other teenagers'.

The ABC exercise

This will help you explain the ABC technique to young people, using the metaphor of changing trains. You can explain the concept with a flipchart or, best of all, get the young people acting this out.

The flipchart version

Draw two trains, one going up Track A and one coming down Track C. Draw a passenger on the train. This passenger is the person being interviewed. Explain that the interviewer's question is 'driving the train' in a particular direction – which is different from where the interviewee wants to go.

The interviewee doesn't want to be a passenger, so they jump off the train (not recommended safe practice!) and run across the bridge. On the other track, Train C is heading in a different direction. They then jump into the cab of Train C and drive it away: they are now in control of the interview.

The role play version

This can be a really fun thing to do (adults and young people seem to love this exercise as it allows them to behave like big kids). Ask two young people to play the trains that are travelling in different directions. Get them to puff up and down a bit. Ask a third young person to play the passenger/interviewee – who then jumps off Train A, runs across the imaginary bridge and takes control of Train C.

As you draw or get the young people to act this out, describe how this relates to an interview situation. For example:

Interviewer: 'So do you think there is a lot of pressure for young people living on the street to join gangs?'

Interviewee: 'That's an interesting question (Acknowledge) ... but (Bridge) what we feel is the real issue here is that young people leaving care should never end up homeless in the first place, so (Control) what we want to see is a new law to ...'

Staying in control

It is important for young people not to let the interviewer put words in their mouth. The interviewer will not necessarily do this as a trap but as a way of summarising the argument.

So, if the interviewer says: 'What you are saying, then, is that it's natural for all young children in care to have difficult behaviour?' the young person being interviewed might reply: 'No – what I'm saying is that it's not unusual for young children to be mischievous and for children in care to be like other children.'

The **broken-record technique** can be useful. This simply means repeating a point over again – maybe using slightly different wording. For example, 'As I said before, many young children are a bit mischievous and children in care are no different from them.'

Staying in control is probably the most important thing to aim for. Young people are experts on their own lives and know much more about this subject than the interviewer, so they should not feel intimidated in any way. While they are being interviewed they should consider themselves VIPs – they are just as important as any celebrity who gives an interview!

Slide 16: How to keep to your agenda

- *Be absolutely clear of your key messages*
- *Don't wait for the right question*
- *Use the ABC technique*
- *Don't let the interviewer put words in your mouth*
- *Use the broken record technique*
- *Be active and take control*

Some techniques for getting the best out of interviews

Trainer notes

There are a variety of techniques people can use to polish up their performance in interviews, but it is better to keep the advice you give to young people as simple as possible. Focus on the main issues during a training session, such as sticking to the agenda. However, you may need to be aware of some of these additional issues, so you can pick up on particular points that arise during interview practice, or in order to answer questions.

This section includes:

- general hints and tips
- body language and voice
- additional hints for television interviews.

General hints and tips for giving interviews

This general list recaps some points already covered as well as offering some new information.

- Don't try to be a robot – stay human and smile, and use a little humour if it's appropriate.
- It's fine to make mistakes – just correct them as naturally as possible. If an interview is pre-recorded you can always ask to do it again.
- Don't let the interviewer put words in your mouth – correct them politely but firmly.
- Never read from notes during an interview. If you need a reminder of a number or phone number, write this on a card and have it with you.
- If you want the programme to give out a helpline number or website, ask about this beforehand. Also have it available.
- When you are giving out a website address, avoid saying 'www' as this sounds a bit weird – go straight into the address.
- If you don't understand the question, ask for it to be repeated.
- If you don't know the answer to something, explain this calmly and then use the ABC technique to get you back to your own agenda. For example:

'I can't answer that question because I'm not a specialist in the law, but what I can say from personal experience is that ...'

- If you are asked questions about areas of your personal life which you do not want to discuss, say politely but firmly 'That is something I don't want to talk about' and then use the ABC technique to talk about your own agenda.

Help young people recognise that it is natural to feel nervous before an interview. (There are stories about famous presenters and newsreaders who have been spotted trembling in the lift before going on air!) See Nerves are normal in the next section.

Body language

We convey a great deal about ourselves from our body language. An anxiously tapping foot or arms hugged tightly across our chest give off signals to the viewer – and may also affect our voice, even if the audience cannot see us.

Getting too relaxed and leaning back too much in the chair may convey to the audience that we are a little bit arrogant or nonchalant about the subject. Leaning forward too far can appear anxious or too intense.

Subtle changes in body language can be used to convey different moods and changes in the argument. For example, if you lean forward at a particular point this can signal that you are really engaging with the conversation about this topic – or can help to make other people feel included in the point you are making. However, these techniques are probably best taught by someone who is experienced in training people in interview techniques. In basic training it is better to encourage young people to aim for a still, upright – but not stiff posture – during an interview.

Tone of voice

If somebody makes a brilliant or passionate point but does it in a flat, uninteresting voice, the impact of what they say may be lost.

Some people find it easy to use their voices and to recognise ways that other people do this. However, not everyone can do this naturally, so if you find this hard to do, it is best not to go into too much detail about this issue. Simply encourage young people to recognise that their voices can help them make their arguments effectively.

An interesting voice has variations in:

- pace (the speed at which you talk)
- pitch (the way you talk – high and squeaky, deep and resonant)
- projection (how loudly or softly you speak).

Slowing down the **pace** can help to emphasise a key point. And is appropriate if we are talking about something very sad or serious. Speeding up the pace

can make us appear focused and business-like. It can also make us seem happier and more bouncy.

For example, if you are changing the subject with the ABC technique it can be useful to speed up the pace slightly to appear efficient and purposeful as you Acknowledge and Bridge, and then slow the pace down slightly as you take Control and start to make your point. (This works best if done naturally – it is best not to teach someone to do this. Just make them aware that this option is available.)

Changing **pitch** and **projection** can also help us make a point. Speaking slightly more loudly and deeply can lend emphasis to a particular point you want to stress. Speaking more gently and softly can make us appear kind and sympathetic.

[see clip in online guide]

Alma has a rich, soft voice, which is good for radio and television, and she uses changes in pitch and pace to emphasise her points. She also has a friendly expression that encourages the viewer to warm to her point of view. (From media training with Voices from Care Cymru, commissioned by SCIE.)

What is most important is to encourage young people to aim for some variation in the way they speak. You can demonstrate this by talking to young people in a monotone (everything at the same pitch and pace and keeping your voice as expressionless as possible). Then demonstrate the contrast by using variations in speed, volume and how serious or light your tone is.

Demonstrating this also provides an opportunity to show that 'tub-thumpers' do not make good interviewees. ('Tub-thumpers' are people who speak very loudly and forcefully and may bang the table to emphasise their point.) While being passionate about your subject is great, a tub-thumper comes across as arrogant, opinionated and not prepared to listen to other people's points of view.

Preparing for a television interview

Television often feels more daunting than radio – people feel 'exposed' by knowing that the audience can see them. There are also some technical aspects of television which can make interviewees feel intimidated as they are unfamiliar, so it is best to explain these to young people in advance.

These notes provide more detailed information to enable you to expand on the points covered in Slide 17.

- **Clothes.** Encourage young people to think about the type of image they want to portray to the audience. Encourage them to wear clothes that won't distract the audience, such as dangly earrings which will catch the light, t-shirts with slogans or detailed illustrations.

- Studio lights tend to wash out pale complexions and make people look ill. All other complexions can look shiny under camera lights so even men can benefit from a bit of make-up in the studio.
- Having a microphone attached to your clothing can be a bit disconcerting so it helps to be prepared for the possibility of this.
- Advice about sitting with both feet on the ground is designed to prevent people crossing their legs - this can look weird on camera especially if you tap your foot nervously while you are talking. Having your feet close to the ground also helps you to feel more centred and 'grounded', which helps you feel in control. Aiming for feet as close to the ground as possible and as still as possible is best – but women, in particular, may want to cross their ankles as this feels more natural.
- It is good to aim for a straight-backed but not stiff posture. Keeping your hands in your lap stops you moving them about too much or running them through your hair or playing with the buttons on your jacket during the interview. (It is best not to join your hands as you may end up white knuckled as you clench them together.)
- During an interview you should speak directly to the interviewer, just as you would in a normal conversation. If you look at the camera you appear rather strange! If you are in a remote studio where there is no journalist present, which sometimes happens, then you will need to look directly at the camera.
- After a television interview it is best to stay in your seat and wait to be told to move. You are usually asked to move after the camera angle has moved back to the presenter. It can be rather humiliating being caught moving before you are meant to – and may spoil the interviewee's experience of an otherwise great interview. Also, don't forget that they may continue recording, so don't say or do anything you don't want to be seen or heard. This did happen once to a prime minister who thought the interview was over and he made a rude comment about some of his cabinet colleagues, which then went out on air! (This is all about staying in control and feeling confident in interview situations.)

Slide 17: Hints for giving TV interviews

- *Wear clothes that won't distract the audience – you want them to listen to you, not try and read the slogan on your top*
- *If they offer you make-up, wear it*
- *Expect to have a lapel microphone tucked into your clothes with the transmitter in your back pocket*
- *Sit with your feet on the ground*
- *Sit upright with your hands resting on your lap*
- *Look directly into the interviewer's eyes – not at the camera*
- *After the interview wait until you are told to move*

How to practise interviews

Trainer notes

Providing young people with an opportunity to experience interviews can be quite straightforward. Something as simple as using a tape recorder helps to create a sense of being in a real interview situation. (Make sure you are able to play back the interviews so that everyone can hear them.) If you do have access to a camera and playback facilities this can also be very helpful, but make the distinction between a 'radio' interview and a 'television' interview.

Slide 18 outlines an exercise which you can introduce at any suitable point during the media training. Before starting the interview practice, talk through the possible questions this project may raise. Also agree the name and location of the project (otherwise young people may be distracted by trying to think up the name and location during the interview).

Encourage the young people to spend time preparing by doing things like:

- identifying their agenda and key message
- thinking of any examples and anecdotes they will use
- generally reflecting on any techniques they have learnt so far, such as the ABC technique
- linking this interview exercise to other work they have done – for example, the Great British Breakfast exercise.

Preparing for your role as interviewer

As interviewers you will need to prepare for this exercise by thinking up a number of questions you might ask. And be prepared to step in with another question or something like 'so I think what you are saying is ...' if the young person seems to be getting stuck. If a young person seems confident and capable, gradually start to ask more challenging questions to encourage them to develop their skills. Good interviewers play Devil's advocate and seldom agree with everything their interviewee says.

Slide 18: A chance to speak out

- *Your local media is running a story about a leaving-care project which is opening in the neighbourhood*
- *The neighbours are protesting because they say it will affect the price of houses, and make the neighbourhood noisy and unsafe*
- *You are asked to give an interview about this*

If young people have their own issues to talk about

Some young people may already have clearly identified issues of their own which they feel passionately about and may ask to do interview practice around these. Make sure you spend some time preparing for this. Good

interviewers always do some research before they start the interview, so talk to the young person about the topic they want to be interviewed about.

If you have the opportunity, ask young people to prepare a topic in advance and bring some information, such as a press release or newspaper cutting, along to the training. You may need to take some time to read up on the issue before you plan your questions. (This may mean shutting yourself away during the lunch break.)

Setting up the interview practice

It is best to do interviews in front of the group and for everyone to listen to or watch the playback straight after each interview. This way young people learn from each other – which is a very valuable part of media training. The 'brave ones' who do interviews first are helping the rest of the group to recognise arguments, phrases and techniques which work well.

Explain that, during media training, if you hear someone use a great anecdote or explanation, it is quite acceptable to adapt this and use it yourself! When adapting other people's anecdotes for general use always bear in mind the need to respect confidentiality.

Sometimes a little 'tweaking' of identity helps to do this. If you feel that saying 'a boy of 17' will give the person's identity away, keep it to something general like 'a young person'. For example, 'I heard someone from our organisation talking about this situation they came across ... apparently this young person had been evicted from their tenancy and ...'

[end box]

Nerves are normal

It is natural for most people to feel nervous in interview situations. Even seasoned professionals get nervous! Encourage all of them to give it a go, and provide lots of positive feedback but never force anyone who is really unwilling. They may not be cut out for doing this and may feel humiliated afterwards.

You may also find that some young people who do not want to try this out in front of the group will agree to do a one-to-one interview with you while the others are getting lunch.

Do not let the group be depressed by someone who does an excellent interview or uses this as an opportunity to start comparing themselves to others. Sometimes it is important to explain that some people are 'natural' interviewees (this is a skill like being able to dance, paint or play football) but everyone can benefit from practising and polishing up their skills. Also, people who are very good at radio are not always so good at television – and vice versa.

Some young people may take a while to 'warm up' during media training and may struggle in the early parts – but with practice and lots of support from the group, they may go on to give very focused interviews.

[see clip in online guide]

In this 'radio interview' Colin shows lots of promise but his use of the phrase 'I'd tell them to shut up!' runs the risk of alienating his audience, which was pointed out to him by other young people on the media training course.

[see clip in online guide]

In this 'television interview' later in the day, Colin has got into his stride, appears calm and focused and makes an excellent argument. (From media training for young people from A National Voice, commissioned by SCIE.)

Involve a 'real' journalist

If you want to give young people the best practice possible then see if you can arrange for someone from the local radio to come and do some training interviews with them. Make it clear to the journalist at the start that this is for training purposes, and that they will not be able to use the interviews recorded at the time.

There is no guarantee that your local radio station will be prepared to do this – they may not have the staff or the time to offer this sort of help. But you might be lucky and find someone who is willing to do this for free or for a very small sum. Some radio stations have staff on their community teams who may be able to offer this kind of support.

Sometimes trainee journalists are willing to do this as well – but make sure they are experienced enough to make this a positive experience for the young people. A good journalist does not try to catch people out but helps the interviewee give the best interviews possible – sometimes trainee reporters take a while to realise this!

Remind young people that the media needs them!

It can be helpful to finish a media training session by reminding young people that without people to interview there would be no interviews!

Slide 19 reiterates many points you will have made earlier in the training, but are worth making again.

Slide 19: The media needs you

- *You know more about this than they do*
- *You are a 'guest' on their programme*
- *You are as important as any politician, celebrity or royal because you are you!*

- *Audiences love to hear people speaking about things they care about and believe in*

Handout

Advice for people speaking to the media about personal issues

It is your choice whether or not you talk to journalists about your personal experiences. The following notes may help you to reach this decision.

Types of publication

Specialists and broadsheets

Different newspapers, magazines and television programmes have different audiences, so they have different news agendas.

A journalist from a specialist social work magazine or a broadsheet newspaper (that's the larger newspapers like 'The Guardian' or 'The Independent') is more likely to write a detailed, in-depth article. They may want to use some of your words as part of this article. Or they may want to write about your personal experiences to go alongside the article. They may be prepared to use first names only or to disguise your identity.

Tabloids and popular magazines

Tabloid newspapers (that's the smaller newspapers like 'The Sun' or 'The Mirror') tend to write shorter, more sensational stories. They reach many people, so can be a good way to get a message across. Tabloid newspapers, women's magazines and certain types of television programmes are very keen on 'human interest' stories where individuals speak about their own experiences.

They usually want this person to use their full name and agree to be photographed. (Some magazines have a policy of only allowing real names to be used, to ensure that the journalist isn't making up the story.) But there are exceptions and some may be happy to disguise your identity. It's always worth asking.

Broadcast media

Radio

Radio can be very powerful because as listeners hear you speaking they tend to focus on your words and your feelings – and it encourages them to use their imagination to put themselves in your situation.

Radio programmes are often prepared to let people disguise their identities or change their names. Radio can feel safer and more anonymous than television – for the obvious reason that they can't see you. (But be aware that people who know you are still likely to recognise your voice unless it is altered in some way.)

Television

Television is also very powerful but for slightly different reasons. It's easier for the viewer to understand you and your experiences because they can see and hear you. But remember there are lots of different programmes. You could be asked to give a comment for a news piece (which might be just 15 seconds long), to appear on a chat show like 'Trisha', or to take part in a documentary, which is made over many months.

Most TV programmes want to identify you, but if you have something very personal to say they may consider letting you remain anonymous (for example, people speaking about rape often have their identities disguised on television). For this they may film just the outline of your shadow or get an actor to speak your words.

Live or pre-recorded?

Some radio and television interviews are live (happening as you speak) and some interviews are pre-recorded (perhaps days or even months before they are broadcast). People often prefer pre-records because they say live interviews will make them nervous. But remember when you are speaking live you have full control over what you are saying. In a pre-record the journalist will have to edit your words down to make them fit the length of the programme.

Programmes are often very short – a journalist may have to fit the opinions of 10 or twelve different people into a 25-minute programme. This is a good reason to try and keep your main messages short and to the point.

Deciding whether to give an interview

You should bear the following points in mind when deciding whether to give an interview:

- Find out from the journalist what sort of information they want from you. Will you have to use your first name or full name or will it be OK to use a made-up name to disguise your identity? Will they expect you to be photographed? What is the article going to be about? Are they planning to use your contribution in any particular way – for example, if they are arguing in favour of a change in the law, do they want to use your experiences to support this?
- Why are you giving this interview? What will you get out of it? Will it achieve your aims? Will it help to support the aims of the organisation/cause you are involved with? Answer these questions for yourself before you agree to do the interview.
- Think about the impact of giving an interview – on yourself, your family and friends. This may help you to decide whether there are any areas you don't want to talk about.

- Remember most journalists are not trying to catch you out! They want an interesting story for their readers or an interesting interview for their audience. They want something which has 'human interest' so their audience/readers can relate to it. They know that the best way to get this is to make you feel relaxed and confident. Many people become journalists because they are genuinely interested in what makes other people tick. And they are all human (well almost all!) and will often take a personal interest in an issue.

When giving an interview

Being clear about your boundaries

- Tell the journalist right from the start if you don't want your name to be used. They need to know this in case they work for a publication which doesn't allow names to be changed.
- Tell the journalist before the interview if there are things you don't wish to talk about – for example, 'I'm not prepared to talk about my brothers and sisters'.
- Journalists will be interested in the details of things that happened to you and how they made you feel. But this does not mean you have to use names or details of other people involved or talk about anything you find too painful. Think about ways you can talk about incidents without using other people's names. Instead of saying 'my friend Sarah felt very angry...' you could say 'there were other young people like me who were angry ...'
- If someone asks you a question you would rather not answer – tell them. Just say 'I'd rather not talk about that.'
- Be careful about using 'off the record'. Sometimes people use this expression to explain why they won't talk about something, such as: 'I don't want to talk about my famous family because my mother is very ill at the moment', and most journalists will respect this. Say to the journalist 'this is off the record' before you tell them this piece of information. But it's only common sense not to tell journalists a fascinating piece of information and then expect them to forget they've heard it. Saying 'Did you know that I'm actually the Prime Minister's long-lost daughter – but please don't print that!' would be too good a story for any journalist to resist! As a general rule, don't tell a journalist anything you don't want them to publish, or give them any photos or documents you don't want them to use.

Staying in control during the interview

- Be clear of your agenda for giving this interview: what do you want to get out of it?
- Identify one or two key messages you want to get across.

- Don't wait for the right question to come up during an interview but be prepared to put across your key message as soon as possible.
- Use the ABC technique to help you 'steer' the interview in the direction you want it to go. ABC stands for Acknowledge, Bridge and Control. You acknowledge the interviewer's question: 'That's an interesting issue ...'. You then create a bridge to where you really want to go – the word 'but' is often the best way to do this. You then take control by talking about your agenda/key message: '... what I really want to get across is that young people in care should be treated just the same as other teenagers.'
- Don't be afraid to ask the journalist whether they have understood what you are saying. Explain something again if you are unsure whether you have got your point across.
- It's only human to make mistakes! You're not a robot so you're allowed to make mistakes – even on radio and TV. Correct it naturally, as you would in a normal conversation.

General points about interviews

- By all means ask the journalist if it is possible to see the article before it is printed or to see/hear the programme before it is broadcast. But be aware that often this is not possible because the journalist may have to write the article/prepare the feature for immediate publication/broadcast that same day. Also, some publications do not allow journalists to show the article to the people they have interviewed because they reserve the right to make last-minute changes, such as cutting out a paragraph to make it fit the page. This may seem hard, but it is the price we pay for living in a country which allows freedom of the press.
- You can change your mind about giving an interview. But it is best to do so before the interview. After the interview may be too late as the material has then become the property of the journalist.
- Don't expect to be paid for giving interviews. (Most journalists earn much less than people believe, and very few newspapers, magazines or programmes make payments.) If you have to travel or have other expenses such as childcare, then they should be prepared to pay this for you. But explain to the journalist from the start so they can try and sort this out for you. They may also be prepared to make a donation to the organisation you represent.

Where to find further information

There is a real dearth of published material about supporting young people and other marginalised groups to challenge media stereotypes. The term 'media' is such a broad brush that it covers a spectrum of issues and it is hard to pinpoint general resources to recommend. Many books and reports focus on the impact of media on viewers, marketing to particular target groups, gender politics and media, or explanations of how new media is developing. There is also plenty of information about how young people can get involved in media activities such as producing podcasts, videos or newsletters, but almost nothing about young people or other marginalised groups as interviewees.

Check the internet to find information which seems most relevant/useful to their needs and to be selective about these.

Some of the resources produced for the national curriculum may be useful and it is worth looking at websites such as Amazon for these.

The Media Trust

The Media Trust is a charity which brings together the media industry and charities. It produces a range of resources and training for voluntary organisations, and opportunities for young people to become involved in media projects

www.mediatrust.org

020 7217 3717

Media Trust Cymru

020 7217 3776

Youthmedia@mediatrust.org

020 7217 3710

Henrietta Bond

Henrietta Bond specialises in media training and communication issues relating to children and young people, particularly those who care experienced. She is also experienced in working with vulnerable and marginalised client groups and organisations working with them.

www.Henriettabond.com

07976 658345

01992 700581, 07976 658345

email: Henri@froper.demon.co.uk

The Talk Consultancy offers a range of media training courses and opportunities for young people to undertake creative projects involving broadcast, print and new media.

www.talkconsultancy.com

0777 6353782

01992 411224

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Social Care Institute for Excellence
Goldings House
2 Hay's Lane
London SE1 2HB
tel 020 7089 6840
fax 020 7089 6841
textphone 020 7089 6893
www.scie.org.uk

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