

### **Dealing with the Media – Tips from University Communications**

1. Maintain eye contact with the reporter. (no matter what goes on off camera, just focus your eyes on the reporter. If you have “wandering eyes,” non-verbally, it has the potential to send a message of “weakened credibility.”)
2. THINK before you talk & be sure to PAUSE at the end of your sentence. (It’s okay to stop and take a second to digest after they’ve asked you a question. Try to incorporate the question into how you word your answer without “repeating” the question. When you have told them your answer, please stop talking, keep your eye contact with the reporter and count to three in your head – that way, they have some space for editing to make you look/sound your best.)
3. TAKE YOUR TIME, speak slowly & clearly. Pronounce your words. (You’re really great at speaking, so I know that I don’t need to tell you that, but sometimes when people get nervous they can talk faster than they normally do.)
4. Avoid the overuse of “BIG” WORDS. Pretend you’re talking to a 10year-old. Being conversational is key, especially for broadcast interviews. (For instance, rather than saying “The genesis and historical trajectory of high-impact philanthropy...”; say, “High-impact philanthropy started as...” or “It began with...”)
5. If you don’t know an answer, it’s okay to say “I DON’T KNOW.” Don’t speculate. And, if you’re uncomfortable about any questions, you can always tie your answer back to your key talking points (the ones we talked about above), as well as your own research/experience.
6. RELAX. SMILE. BE YOURSELF. BE COMFORTABLE. BE GENUINE.
7. Avoid fidgeting (swaying, rocking, tapping, etc.)
8. Hand movements are okay as long as they do not block your face.
9.  $1 \times 7 = 0$  vs.  $7 \times 1 = 1$ . Determine 1-3 key messages ahead of time and deliver those key messages over and over again. If you say seven different things one time, it may not register. If you say the same thing over and over seven different times, the reporter, viewer, or listener will be more likely to walk away with your key message.

10. **NOTE YOUR SCHOOL AFFILIATION:** Mention more than once that you are based at Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice.
11. **MOST IMPORTANTLY: NOTHING IS EVER "OFF THE RECORD."** Even if the interview is over or you are in a casual conversation in the elevator, just make a mental note that "anything you say can and will be used against you."

The SP2 strategic marketing and communications team conducts proactive media relations via press releases and pitching and supports and/or facilitates media interviews. Recent SP2 media coverage is located at <https://sp2.upenn.edu/press-archive/>.

**NOTE: Notification of new research:** In keeping with the approaches of our peer schools, we encourage you to notify [sp2news@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:sp2news@sp2.upenn.edu) when your findings are first accepted for publication so that we can plan a communications approach while maintaining distribution embargoes.

**If you have any questions, have an upcoming interview with a journalist, or have newsworthy information to share, please contact the strategic marketing and communications team in the Office of Institutional Advancement:**

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