

Training Manual for Media and Disability Rights

Disability Awareness in Action, 1999
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Introduction

This is a training manual for organisations of disabled people, as guidance for seminars with the media on disability as a rights issue.

The media coverage of disability is one of the main obstacles to disability rights being given the priority they deserve. In every country in the world the media either ignores the rights of disabled people or portrays disabled people as pathetic recipients of charity or tragic but brave victims. The struggle for equality and freedom from oppression and discrimination, which is the real story of the disability movement, is given little space on radio, TV or the print media.

In 1998 Index on Censorship (a UK organisation promoting freedom of speech), the BBC World Service Education and DAA formed an alliance to gain funding for a programme of activities to raise awareness of disability as a rights issue in Africa. In January 1998, Index on Censorship produced a report on the situation of Disabled Africans and in April and May 1998, the BBC World Service produced a series of programmes in the six main languages of Africa (English, French, Portuguese, Hausa, Somali and Swahili) on disability as a human rights issue. A resource kit produced by DM supported these programmes. Then in October, 1998 a three-day seminar was held in Harare, Zimbabwe to bring together disabled and media delegates from all over English speaking Africa to share experiences and to work out a way for using the media to get the human rights message across.

This training manual is based on the experience of that seminar - learning from the successes and the failures of that event - and the training and experience of the writers as educators and trainers. We hope this manual will be used by the disability organisations whose delegates attended the seminar and encourage them to arrange similar seminars in their country and region. We also hope that it will encourage other readers to support similar events in their own countries, across the world.

There is a serious need for disabled activists to be able to use the media effectively - and for the media to understand disabled activists and our issues are as important and newsworthy as any other. We have to learn to make friends with the written word, the camera and the microphone so that we can make our message heard. The media needs us as much as we need them - they need our stories to fill their news-slots!

As well as the suggested programme for a seminar on media and disability rights, we have given organisational guidance and tips for trainers and workshop leaders which should prove useful for any training seminar or workshop that organisations may wish to run on any other subject.

The DAA Resource Kit 1 - How to Work with the Media, would be helpful when used alongside this training manual.

Training manual

These plans and guidance are for you to use as you wish. They are not rules that you have to abide by, but are an aid your own creativity in making a three-day event an exciting learning experience for all concerned.

Good training is stimulating and enjoyable

This manual should help that enjoyment by assisting you to make sure that you have:

- clear objectives
- established good partnerships with the media
- sufficient funding for the seminar
- a well-thought out programme
- the right mix of participants and trainers
- a good, relaxed working environment
- the opportunity to problem-solve, share ideas and stimulate
- a clear administrative strategy

Objectives

You have to be absolutely clear about your objectives and ensure that you communicate them clearly and accurately to everyone concerned. Make them short and focussed. You cannot do everything in one seminar! Repeat them as often as you can - on funding applications, invitations, press releases, reports, programmes, anything and everything you send out regarding this training.

For the Harare Seminar our objective was: **to raise awareness of disability as a human rights issue and to work with the media on how to get that message across.**

Partnerships

As the objective is to work with the media, then the next task is to build a relationship with our media. You may already have contacts. Strengthen them, invite one or two to a planning meeting to help with technical advice

The seminar in Harare would not have been successful if we had not established a good partnership with the BBC World Service and other media people in Zimbabwe. The journalists felt that it was just as important for them to be part of the seminar as it was for the disabled delegates.

Journalists may be unable to participate in more than one day of a seminar but input from a variety of media people will widen your audience as well as give you a greater breadth of experience.

Helpful hints!

Make friendly contacts with journalists. If you or your organisation is invited to a reception, contact the press officer, who will be an ex-journalist who may be able to help you and suggest other useful contacts.

- Find out where journalists like to meet informally and meet them (hotel bars are a good place). Do not forget they are as keen to get a good story as you are to tell one.
- You can get a list of members of the **Foreign Correspondents' Association** at most Embassies.
- There is a 'stringer' for the **BBC World Service, Voice of America** and **CNN** in most countries.
- Tell the journalists about the Harare Seminar and the valuable experience it offered for journalists who took part.
- Try to find journalists that are sympathetic about human rights issues. See who writes/produces programmes on these issues and contact them.

Funding

This is everyone's nightmare - but it has to be overcome if you want to have a good seminar. If you have clear objectives and have already built up a partnership with the media, then you are halfway to having a very good funding application. Building on the success of one seminar, your media friends may well be able to suggest new funding opportunities in your region/country.

Your organisation may have considerable experience in raising money but further information is given in DM's Funding Resource Kit, available from the DM office in London.

Helpful hints!

Try local businesses for sponsorship - they might be more enthusiastic about supporting projects involving the media.

- Make sure you have a proper budget.
- Do not forget the extra costs of disability or that these may have to be explained to a sponsor.
- Do not forget to include sign language interpretation, alternate media costs, transport costs and any personal assistance needs that you may have to meet.
- If you are inviting delegates from other countries, remember that they may have difficulties reaching your country - it is possible that they will have to stay extra nights and will expect those costs to be covered too.
- Contact funders who are already supporting your work and talk to them about this project. It is a new area for them and they might be interested, especially when they see you have planned everything so well and know what you are doing.

Good Luck !

The programme

The programme should allow participants to:

- Clearly analyse and understand the objectives
- Problem solve
- Implement
- Devise further action

The programme for the Harare seminar lasted three days. We have divided the work into sessions so that you can arrange your own programme over whatever period you wish. Experience in Harare showed that **clearly stating the aims** for **each** session helped delegates to get the most from each session. We have suggested timings for each session.

Remember that people cannot learn efficiently for long periods. Educational psychologists suggest that 45 minutes is the maximum period over which most people can remain focused and fully involved. Where the session includes smaller work-groups, the sessions can be extended but, in any event, 90 minutes should be the longest trainees are expected to work without a break.

If there is sign language or other translation with only one translator, you will need to ask the interpreter how often they will need a break (probably every 45 minutes).

Opening Ceremony

15 minutes

This is not compulsory but it will raise the profile of your seminar and give you further media contacts.

A well-known personality or the head of your national TV or radio network, could open the event - this is likely to attract more attention from the media.

Ask the opening speaker to stay for the introductions and discussion of objectives if possible.

Session 1

The aims for this session are:

- to look at the situation as it is
- to look at the way national and local media are responding (or not responding) to disability as a human rights issue, and
- discuss how the media attitude has affected disabled individuals and the movement.

Suggested method:

15 minutes

Introductions and short discussion on objectives and programme.

25 minutes

Split into small groups and discuss problems that individuals/organisations have had with the media in either their presentation or disregard of disability rights stories.

30 minutes

Bring that back to the full group with highlights from each group with full discussion on how the problems arose and what is the possible solution.

(5 minutes are allowed for the change from groups to plenary and back again)

Session 2

The aim of this session is for delegates to:

- analyse what makes a good human rights story, and
- how the media present positive images.

Suggested method:

1 hour

Split into groups again and look at positive images in the media. These can be positive images of disability or any other human rights issue.

Feed back to whole group and discussion on what are the shared elements of these positive images - how did the journalists make them into positive, rather than negative images?

Session 3

The aims of this session are:

- to build on the learning of the previous sessions, and
- to look at techniques for getting the message across.

Suggested method:

30 minutes

Discussion on how to get the message across. Brief overview of the five Ws and an H. (Who, What, When, Where, Why and How - all questions that should be answered in any message giving.)

30 minutes

Individuals write their own story in 100 words trying to answer all those questions as clearly and excitingly as possible.

15 minutes

Two willing volunteers chosen to read out their stories and accept comment from the rest.

15 minutes

Discussion of what is to happen in the next two sessions, which will be practice interviews on TV and radio. Delegates asked to think overnight of stories they want to tell in interviews.

Sessions 4 and 5

The aim of these sessions is to:

- continue practising techniques of message-giving, through simulated TV and radio interviews

Suggested method:

Each session should last 2.5 hours with a 15 minute break

Practical session in TV and radio studios to simulate real studio and interview conditions.

The delegates should be divided into two groups, the first group does TV and the second group radio for Session 4. They change round for Session 5.

Each group will have an introduction from their trainer giving general points for the most effective ways of getting the message across. Then each individual should take it in turns to be both interviewer and interviewee and comments given from the group on performance.

Technical requirements for these sessions:

- A radio studio with play-back facilities
- A TV studio with digital camera and sound, with play-back and (if possible) video recording facilities

Session 6

The aim of this session is to:

- consolidate what has been learnt, both by disabled delegates and members of the media.

Suggested method:

20 minutes

Choose a journalist to talk to the group about what they think:

1. are the difficulties in understanding disability as a human rights issue, and
2. are the best ways of building co-operation between the disability movement and the media.

40 minutes

Questions and discussion

1 hour

Full feedback from all delegates and trainers and any observing media people on what they have learnt. It might be helpful to have warned everyone at the end of Session 5 that they will have to do this so that they can think about it and perhaps make some notes.

Session 7

Aims of this session are to ensure that:

what has been learnt will not be forgotten or unused,

- people who have not been able to attend the seminars will have an opportunity of reaming and perfecting their media message-giving, and
- there is a final plenary session, that agrees an action plan for delegates and either a joint statement or press release for the media.

Suggested method:

45 minutes

Delegates who have been so active for three days need to apply that sense of purpose to something practical. An action plan, which actually requires individuals to take some responsibility within a set timeframe, is helpful (Appendix 1 gives the Statement and Action plan of the Harare seminar). For Harare it was a requirement of the invitation to delegates that they would take responsibility for putting on similar seminars in their own countries or regions, creating an ever increasing circle of activity to focus on this important issue.

15 minutes

Leave time for saying thank you's and good-bye's. Remind delegates to complete the monitoring forms and leave them with you before they leave (rather than forgetting to post them!).

There are many other things that you can do to become more skilful when 'puffing the message across' on TV or radio:

- Watch TV and listen to radio in an analytical way. See how pictures are made, listen to how experienced radio presenters put the message across. Note their use of humour, change of pace, without losing the focus of what they want to say.
- Respond to bad press with letters etc.
- Complain about advertisements that portray disabled people in a negative way.
- Talk to advertisers and the media about accurately showing disabled people as ordinary members of the public.
- Get involved with the media in formulating policy concerning the presentation of disabled people.
- Encourage and support the provision of signing or subtitles (captions) on TV.
- Support the employment of disabled people in the media.

Delegates and training

This is an intensive three-days in which everyone should have the opportunity to participate on an equal basis. It is very difficult to ensure that this happens with too many delegates taking part - even when you divide the delegates into smaller workshops. For the Harare Seminar, we agreed 15-20 delegates - which was a manageable number - and suggest that you limit the people at your seminars to a similar number. Quite apart from the need to ensure that all delegates participate on an equal basis, greater numbers will cause difficulties for the trainers.

It is important that there should be a good gender balance among the delegates. We managed to achieve this in Harare by asking organisations to make a special effort to send women delegates. It is also important that people with different impairments are able to participate.

Helpful hints!

- A Chairperson will be needed for the Opening Ceremony and closing plenary session.
- The first two sessions need a trainer to facilitate them - this could either be a member of your organisation who is experienced in running training sessions or a suitably experienced disabled person who is not directly connected to the host organisation.
- Session 3 requires a print journalist to work effectively.
- Practical sessions 4 & 5 need TV and radio reporters/documentary presenters and as many technicians as the presenters feel that they require. The trainers should preferably have experience in human rights and your region and have some understanding of disability as a human rights issue. The trainers for these sessions will also tell you exactly what equipment they require.
- Although studios may assist without charging you, to be safe, you will need to budget for hiring equipment, technicians and studios for the day.
- It would help if copies of video footage and radio tapes were given to delegates, so that they can see/hear themselves and use them for other training events in the future.
- One of the journalists will need to be selected to give the talk on the last day.
- Make sure that all the delegates and trainers are well prepared before hand - they should have a draft programme and any background documents that you think would be helpful.
- Don't forget that some journalists are not used to communicating with disabled people. They particularly need to understand:
 - not to speak too fast if there is a need for interpretation
 - that printed material needs to be available in other formats, for example Braille or large print.

- Equip visually impaired delegates with a small tape recorder for the writing exercise, if they do not have a note-taker and ensure that all overheads or other written material that has not been seen before is read out and described.

Working environment

Comfortable, accessible meeting rooms and accommodation are essential factors for a good learning/working environment. It is also important that delegates do not get tired travelling from one place to another and are able to go to their rooms for rest, if necessary.

Helpful hints!

- You will need to find fully accessible residential accommodation for delegates and trainers and ensure the availability and accessibility of the studios for Sessions 4 & 5. We recommend that the accommodation and meeting room are in the same place. You will probably need to travel to the studios, so lunch and drinks will have to be arranged there as well.
- You will need a meeting room that is large enough to accommodate the delegates and sufficient tables and chairs. Remember that some of the delegates are likely to be wheelchair-users and that they need to be able to move around safely. Overhead projectors and flipcharts should be available.
- To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate equally, you might find it helpful to agree some ground rules for conducting the meetings at the beginning. A list of possible ground rules is provided in Appendix 2. These should be agreed at the beginning of the meeting and kept visible so that people can be reminded of them. These may be particularly necessary for the practical sessions.
- It is vital to remember how nervous everyone feels (even if they do not show it) when they are on television or radio. Comments on a delegate's performance must be supportive and encouraging, rather than critical or discouraging.
- Make sure that water is available throughout all the sessions and that tea, coffee and a light lunch are served at the appropriate times.
- Ensure that the temperature of meeting rooms and studios is comfortable and that you know whom to contact to adjust the temperature in the room.

Opportunities

If:

- you have a programme that has a similar balance to the one we have suggested,
- the trainers are enthusiastic and fully aware of what they are supposed to do, and
- you have the organisation of the event under control

then you will have given the delegates and the media present the best possible environment in which to take up the opportunities of sharing experience and seeking solutions to problems.

Administration

Below is a list of administrative tasks that are involved in organising a seminar, once funding has been promised, the date and programme has been set and initial contacts with press have been made.

There may be other tasks that you will need to add-these are only for guidance

Pre-seminar - at least 6 months (preferably 9 months)-before date of seminar

- Agree action timetable and who is going to do what.
- Book venue, accommodation, refreshment, studios and equipment, ensure bookings are agreed in writing and that venues are fully accessible or will be by the time of the event. Give estimate of numbers - exact needs to be confirmed later.
- Notify potential delegates of draft programme, venue and dates with registration form for accommodation, transport and information needs.
- Confirm trainers, who should also receive the draft programme etc.
- Start collating material for delegate's pack, including monitoring form.

At least 2 - 3 months before:

- Chase up any registration forms not received.
- Book sign language interpreter or language interpreters, if necessary.
- If you are having simultaneous language interpreters, book the necessary equipment.
- Confirm exact hotel bookings now that you have registration forms.
- Make travel arrangements and arrangements for picking people up from airport to take to venue.
- Book accessible transport to go from accommodation to studios (if necessary).
- Finish collating material for delegate's pack and, if necessary, have material translated and put into alternate formats. Include monitoring form in delegate's pack (see Appendix 5).
- Give trainers full instructions of what is expected of them and any requirements for people with sensory impairments
- Contact airport with numbers of disabled people coming in; agree a strategy with them.
- If any of the trainers are flying in with special technical equipment make sure that you have all letters, invoices etc. to help them clear customs.
- You may have to think about the costs that might be incurred if one of the delegates is ill and requires medical attention. Will the delegates be required to have their own travel/medical insurance or will you have to bear any costs?
- Prepare press pack of info. on timetable, biographies of trainers, O some background information - an example of a good and a bad story and/or pictures might be interesting. You might like to consider holding

a press conference during the seminar - a lunchtime is quite a good time

1-week before

- Send out press release about the event
- Phone press day after to see if they are going to cover it.
- Confirm menus with hotel and studio (remember that you do not to have to have meals at the hotel during the time you are all at the studios)
- Make sure transport arrangements are all right and that you have completed arrangements for meeting at airport and transportation to accommodation.
- Prepare per diem payments and expenses forms. Don't forget that some airports require airport tax in a different currency, such as dollars. Have you got enough of that currency to give those delegates who need it?
- Make sure the delegate's packs are all ready and available in accessible formats.
- Make sure that you have pencils and paper and perhaps a tape recorder for the writing exercise.
- Are there flip charts in the meeting room?
- Designate one person who is not involved in the seminars themselves to be available for inquiries, problems etc.
- Make sure that the delegates all know their exact time- table, where they should go and how to contact the problem- solver.

After the Seminar

- You might want to send out a press statement on any important O outcomes of the seminar or write a brief letter on what took place to your national/local newspapers.
- Send 'thank you' letters to trainers.
- Complete the income and expenditure account.
- Send narrative and financial report to funders - this is most important and should be done as soon as possible, it will encourage them to give you funding for other projects. Include breakdown of returned monitoring forms.
- A short narrative report could be sent to national/international disability or media in-house newsletters.

Appendix 1 - Statement from harare seminar

Harare human rights & Media Seminar

Plan of Action

At all times the message is - Disability is a human rights issue. Our rights are violated systematically, daily in all countries of Africa and the rest of the world. Our message is ignored or distorted by the media. Our humanity is not recognised or recorded.

Disabled people's organisations must take action to put our message across and the delegates of this seminar will take the following actions:

Work with their organisations to: replicate this workshop in their countries and throughout their region

- set up an organisational media strategy
- collect evidence to prove the message
- sensitise their national and local media of the message
- promote the inclusion of disabled people within the media and on the boards/policy-making bodies of the media
- ensure regular positive disability programmes and articles in mainstream media

We have the right to be seen and heard!

Appendix 2 - Tips for trainers and workshop leaders..

The material presented in this Appendix has been taken from DAA's Resource Kit 4: **Organisation Building** (the full Resource Kit can be obtained from DAA).

Training

Training the membership is one of the most important roles of an organisation. It contributes to the development of individuals and to the democracy and development of the whole organisation. People are the central resource of any organisation. You can make that resource grow by recruiting new members and by increasing the skills and participation of existing members.

Training isn't always formal, through workshops or courses. It can happen through involvement in any aspect of a project.

An important decision for formal training is who is to be trained. Is training an individual better than training a whole group? Who will benefit?

Knowledge is power, but power must be shared.

How things are done may be more important than what is done.

Trainer's check list:

- Is there a real dialogue between members and the leadership?
- Do members wait for ideas to come from the leadership?
- Does the leadership impose its ideas on the group?
- Are there some people who always hang back and don't speak?
- How can they be encouraged to take part?
- What opportunities are there for training others in leadership skills?
- Can the leadership gradually do less - as others gain the confidence and skills to take a bigger part in activities?
- How are decisions reached?
- Are all the women in the group given the opportunity to take part in leadership?
- Which other groups are under-represented in leadership and should have training?

Assessment and action

- What training is needed?
- What are its aims?

You should be clear on these things before you commit resources to training. Answers to improving an organisation's efficiency may lie elsewhere. You also

need to distinguish between present and future training needs. Current needs are due to things not working well at the moment. To solve these problems, change will be needed. Future needs will arise as a result of change.

Training should be directed towards a specific goal. It should involve full participation by trainees and regular reviews of how well the training is working.

Training in groups allows the people taking part to look at themselves and how they work as individuals and as part of a group.

Always include time for evaluation of how a particular training session has worked, what the results were, what the trainees thought of the training and what they got out of it.

Learning from mistakes

Whenever something has clearly gone wrong, rather than giving blame to individuals, encourage everyone to look at the structures of the organisation and what has gone wrong.

Example 1

Perhaps Member A always offers to do something and then doesn't manage it. Don't be cross with Member A. Look at structures for change. Give the work to Member A to share with Member B, who is more likely to do it. It may be that Member A wants to do the work but does not know how to do it and needs help.

Example 2

Member C and Member D always argue in committee meetings and contradict each other. Don't just shout at them but insist that all speakers should talk to the Chairperson, in the order the Chair chooses. The Chair can control who speaks when and can stop arguments developing.

- One: What has gone wrong?
- Two: Why did it go wrong?
- Three: Could it have been avoided within the current set-up of the organisation?
- Four: How can things be changed to prevent it happening again?
- Five: What action or training needs to be taken? By whom?

Training model

- **Participant (the person taking part) does, hears, sees or says something that aids the development of the individual and the group**

can lead to

- **Participant uses the experience and skills gained in a practical way**

can lead to

- **Participant develops rules to work by from experience and observation**

can lead to

- **Participant shares their reactions and observations with others**

Involving everyone

Make sure that just a few individuals do not dominate the discussion. It might be useful to report back the main points made in the workshop or seminar, without the need to identify which particular individuals made which points.

It is important to consider the most supportive and relaxing environment for disabled people to develop their ideas and their confidence. It is good for people to develop public-speaking or presentation skills, as this will boost their self-esteem, but at times it can also be useful to break off into small groups for support and discussion.

A good way for a workshop leader to start is to identify the main areas of debate. It is very important that everyone takes part. There will often be one or two people with a lot to say. The leader needs to make sure these people don't dominate and to open the discussion up to others. Often, the quieter people, who are listening carefully to all that is being said, will have as valuable points to contribute as the people who come to the workshop with a lot to say.

Complaints

Common complaints from seminar and workshop participants are that too much time is taken up by lectures from guest speakers or facilitators. A good seminar or workshop will have a brief introduction from the person leading the session and then will move on to group discussion, guided and prompted to some extent by the leader. Too many workshops are run like seminars.

You need to strike a balance. When a seminar is organised to convey new ideas, some participants will complain about a lack of opportunity for individuals to exchange opinions and experiences. Yet, when a workshop is organised to allow for this exchange, some will feel that there is a lack of new ideas.

Remember that some people need more time than others to express themselves. Give space to everybody who wants to make a point or comment. Make sure that everyone understands that they must be patient and must express themselves slowly, so that Sign Language interpreters can keep up.

Teamwork takes planning!

Appendix 3 - Ground rules

You might want to run through these ground rules before starting a workshop or seminar session:

- This session belongs equally to everyone taking part.
- If you don't understand, please ask the facilitator to explain in a different way.
- Challenge one another if you don't agree. Don't leave it up to the facilitator.
- Don't challenge individuals but do challenge views and opinions.
- You have the right to express your opinion; the responsibility to work with others.
- When talking about how you feel, use "I", not "people", or "we".
- Respect the need for confidentiality. To get the most from a session, we need to feel free to discuss things in an open and honest way that will be private afterwards.
- There will be no smoking in the place where the session happens.
- Please arrive on time.
- Only one person can speak at a time. Follow the facilitator's lead on this.

Appendix 4 - Tips on how to write a story

- The role of the media is to inform, educate and entertain.
- Remember that competition in the media is driven by the need for information that is timely, accurate, clear, concise, and interesting.
- Every news story and every feature article needs the Five Ws and an H (WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE & HOW). And don't forget So what?
- The Inverted Pyramid.
- The news intro or 'lead': finding a good peg for the story.
- News sources: a story is always better when the reporter uses more than one source to develop it. The three sources of information.

The inverted pyramid

- There are many ways of structuring a news story. The most common is the 'inverted pyramid'. This means put all the most important information at the top of the story, with the remaining information in descending order of importance.
- Remember that stories have to fit on a page. In the rush to get to the printing press on time, your story might be cut from the bottom. Make sure that contains the least important information.
- The Introduction (or "lead") should try to answer as many as possible of the 5 Ws and H:
- Who said/did what? When, where, why and how?
- Next try to show the significance-So what?

Writing Clearly in English

- Write the way you talk (but edit out all the unnecessary words that we often throw into speech).
- Write simply. Small words are better than big words. Small English words tend to be clear and unambiguous. Using small words can make a story more intelligent, rather than less intelligent.
- Use active (subject-verb-object) sentences, i.e. "John purchased the book" is clearer than "The book was purchased by John". And "John bought the book" is better.
- Use short sentences, concrete words, familiar words. Keep most sentences under 25 words, and if possible under 20 words. Vary the lengths of sentences, but remember that sentences over 30 words are difficult to read.
- Don't overdo adjectives (these are good to evoke a mood or portrait, but can be judgmental). Specific is better than vague, thus, it is better to say the "gleaming black car" than the "clean dark car".
- Use active verbs: a creative, but accurate use of verbs makes more impact than flowery phrases.
- When in doubt use 'said'. Writers get bored with writing "s/he said" when attributing a story and often try to vary with words like "stated", "declared", "asserted", "claimed", etc. But each of these variations has subtle tones and meanings, and can be dangerous. "Said" is neutral.

Use Examples, Familiar Words, Strong Verbs, and Don't Stop Explaining!

- Use lots of examples. This makes it easier for the reader to follow. Examples put information into a form that readers can grasp more easily than abstract terms. If you tell readers that children love their teacher, show how they demonstrate their love.
- Explain, explain, and explain! Remember that readers don't have the journalist's background knowledge of the subject.
- Use terms readers can understand. When you use unusual terms, define them.
- Use strong verbs. Start by eliminating the words to be from most of your prose. Is and are merely express existence. Good writers will find verbs that move the action along, e.g. "His report punctured the motion" is stronger than "His report was against the motion"
- Avoid fancy language, flowery language, pompous language, slang, argot and jargon. Do not say a child "got negative reinforcement" if you can say it got a "spanking". Avoid the language of bureaucrats, lawyers, policemen and teachers. Paraphrase.
- Use language strong enough to give readers a clear picture of the story's events. The good writer can be stylish without writing long, tortuous sentences, and without using flowery language.
- Avoid negatives e.g. "We haven't failed to notice that an opponent did not attempt to veto the ban on smoking". Show you respect the reader and cut down on negatives.
- Do not use extra verbs when nouns can carry some of the meaning. Do not say: "Everyone interested in participating in the tryouts should attend" Instead, say: "Everyone interested in trying out should attend" Trying out contains the meaning of participating, so the writer can drop a word.
- Do not use extra nouns when verbs can carry some of the meaning. Do not say: "The policeman ran a routine check, which showed the car was stolen". If the check showed something, we can safely assume the policeman did run the check. The reporter does not need to spell it out. Remember, there are many stories competing for little space, so word economy is primary.
- Use short quotations to make the story interesting.
- Statistics can make a story authoritative-but use them sparingly, and check, double check and check again to make sure they are accurate.
- Do not shy away from "embarrassing" subjects. For example, if you mean "sexy", say it.
- If you want your story to get into the paper, write about unusual, interesting subjects that other publications are not writing about, or find a new angle to an old story. This usually means going for a longer feature article.

Appendix 5 - Tips for dealing with journalists

These are excerpts from papers presented by Kit Wells, Trainer. If you copy this material please ensure that Kit well's is credited with the copyright.

The first enquiry or whoever answers the phone

- Never say 'no comment' or be negative
- Know who the people are and who you can refer to
- Always co-operate and try and find someone who can deal with the enquiry
- Make a note of who called from where and when
- Indicate (if you know) when the company may make a statement etc.,

On the spot

- If you are 'on the spot' and take the enquiry/questions, think carefully, be positive.
- Always state the facts as far as you know.
- **But** never speculate as to what may have happened if you don't know.
- Take notes of who-you are speaking to and what media/newspaper they are from.
- Never admit liability of any kind.

Some useful phrases:

"Too early to say exactly what has happened we are doing everything we can to find out what the problem is."

"We will give you a full update in 10 minutes/30 minutes," etc.

"We are doing everything we can to sort it out."

"The company will do everything it can to establish what happened."

Press releases

Whether they are directly involved in the writing of press releases, or more simply responsible for authorising their content and regularity, delegates must remember the following:

- keep them short and simple
- Put all key information into first paragraph
- Find a good eye-catching headline that properly sums up the story
- Remember newsrooms always look for an 'angle'. Decide what the angle is in your story
- Provide one or two good quotes from relevant people
- Ensure that these key people are available for interview when they are needed.

- If background information is important, attach it separately
- Don't make any assumptions about the reader's knowledge of the subject

Press conferences

Press conferences can be the most effective way of taking charge of events and controlling information to the public. Delegates should bear in mind the following:

- Ensure there's a room available for interviews afterwards
- Is there a key person(s) involved in the subject who can/will talk?
- Be aware of journalists' deadlines
- Member of staff as minder (not spokesperson)
- Ensure co-ordination of information, updates and sources

How to prepare for an interview

- Know your stuff (e.g. memorise a mental shortlist of important points)
- Be concise at all times. Speak clearly and keep it simple
- Clarify with the interviewer what the item will be used for
- Clarify length of interview
- Ask who else is being interviewed on the subject
- Is it live or pre- recorded?
- Co-operate
- Don't be afraid of repeating yourself if a point has been missed or ignored
- Retain good eye contact
- Give complete statements where possible (no 'it' or 'they' at the start of an answer)
- Assume ignorance on the part of the audience
- Always check appearance discreetly but thoroughly
- Wear camera and microphone 'friendly' clothes (e.g. no rustling silk or loud prints, all black or pure white not recommended). Choose clothing with front openings as microphones are often attached to you.
- Use your own conversational style of speech; it's more effective to be yourself
- Ignore the camera at all times
- Avoid heavy handed mannerisms such as arm-flapping though an animated performance is always desirable
- Look as though you are enjoying yourself even if you're not!

How to give a good interview

No instant miracles here, I am afraid-but a few hints and tips to help you.

- Check your name, spelling and title are right
- Know what you want to say
- Be concise and make simple statements

- What's the story being used for (context)
- Memorise several key points, no more
- How long will the finished item be?
- What is the first question going to be?
- Is it live or pre- recorded?
- Who else is being interviewed on the subject?
- Answer questions in an appropriate manner (e.g. think who your audience are)
- Make your interview a jargon free zone
- Wear camera and microphone friendly clothes
- Smile wherever appropriate
- Appear to co-operate (hostility in even the most trying circumstances will make for nastier interviews)
- Relax-the real you is the most persuasive
- Stay 'in character' for at least 5 seconds before and after interview has taken place
- Never look at the camera

Improving media awareness within your organisation

Improve media awareness by:

- newsletters/in house magazines/video/adding media check to team
- briefings/looking at media coverage more critically/looking for local angles on national stories/allocating spokespeople
- building from the bottom
- it's not always the boss who should talk
- building bridges with the media
- developing personal contacts with journalists
- establishing a strategy for the workplace

Types of story

- 'Lots of people are affected by it' (government/social issues/law)
- 'It could happen to me' (disarming a gunman/transplant baby)
- 'Over the garden fence' (Bill Clinton/'Diana gate' tapes)
- 'It's in vogue' (child abuse/joyriding)
- 'It's important' (Bosnia/Somalia)
- 'It's amazing!' (tortoise beats hare/man bites dog)
- 'It's a disgrace' (corruption and scandal)

Does getting news coverage matter?

Yes!

- Keeps up profile of organisation in general
- Bad news is better than no news
- Seen as a spokesperson on issues related to you
- Develops good media contacts for later use
- Helps develop positive image

No!

- Could be misrepresented
- Media is essentially untrustworthy
- Who cares about getting coverage anyway?

Appendix 6 - Example of delegate monitoring form

Name of organisation

Seminar evaluation form

We would be most grateful if you could answer the following questions so that we can properly evaluate the success of this seminar.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is least value and 5 is very useful and A is absent) the value to you of the following sessions:

Session 1 2 3 4 5 A

1

Session 1 2 3 4 5 A

2

Session 1 2 3 4 5 A

3

Session 1 2 3 4 5 A

4

Session 1 2 3 4 5 A

5

Session 1 2 3 4 5 A

6

Session 1 2 3 4 5 A

7

Using the same scale (where 1 is unsatisfactory and 5 is satisfactory, A is absent) please answer the following questions:

How would you rate the venue and its facilities? 1 2 3 4 5 A

How would you rate the catering arrangements? 1 2 3 4 5 A

How would you rate the general organisation of the seminar? 1 2 3 4 5 A

Any other comments that you have:

Please write your name and address if you wish to be placed on the mailing list to receive details of future seminars and conferences:

Name:
Organisation:
Address:

Please hand your completed form to a staff member or place it in the box provided at the registration desk. Alternatively send it to _____ at the address below.

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