



FACES & VOICES OF RECOVERY

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Recovery Community
Messaging Training

**KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL
INTERVIEWS**

Our Goals

- Learn tips to prepare for interviews
- Learn techniques for working with reporters
- Learn tips on how to look, act and speak your best

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Preparation

- Decide if this interview makes sense for you and your organization
- Determine your primary goal in participating in the interview
- Role play the interview and rehearse hard questions
- Visualize your audience and speak to them as though they were in the room
- Assume that everything you say will be recorded or written down

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Prepare for Interviews: Know Your Message

- Know in advance which points you want to get across – work them into your responses
- Focus on **your** key points, not the interviewer's points

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Prepare for Interviews: Deliver Your Message

- Use colorful language such as metaphors or analogies that help to make your point to increase the likelihood of being quoted

Example: “Recovery helped me pick up the shattered pieces of my life.”

- Use anecdotes from your work, your life and your community to support your points
- Speak in lay person’s terms – if you must use jargon or technical language, explain it

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Prepare for Interviews: Facts You Can Use

- Tens of thousands of Americans recover from addiction every year
- Over 20 million Americans are in long-term recovery from addiction
- Untreated addiction costs the US over \$450 billion every year

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Prepare for Interviews: Facts You Can Use

- 75% of people with alcohol or other drug problems are employed.
- Jails and prisons are over crowded with a majority of inmates having committed alcohol or drug-related crimes.
- More than eight out of every ten Americans who need services for addiction to alcohol and other drugs are not receiving the help they need to get well.

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Techniques: Working with a Reporter

- Don't allow the reporter to set the tone of the interview

Set a comfortable pace for yourself by pausing and gathering your thoughts

- NEVER lie to a reporter
- If you don't know the answer, say so but tell the reporter you will get the information

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Techniques: Working with a Reporter and Staying on Message

If you get a question you don't want to answer, change the question by using a transitional or "pivoting" phrase such as:

- "Another thing to remember..."
- "That's not my area of expertise, but what I can tell you is..."
- "Another way of thinking about this is..."
- "Thank you for asking..."
- "The most important thing to remember..."

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Techniques: Staying on Message

Q. “Some people believe addiction is a personal or moral weakness. How do you respond?”

“More important than addiction...is recovery. The fact is that just like me, over 20 million Americans are in long-term recovery from addiction.

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Techniques: Staying on Message

Q. “What was it like to be an addict?”

“What I can tell you about is recovery. As a person in long-term recovery, I’ve been able to create a better life for myself and my life. Over the last 15 years, I’ve bought a house, have a great job and am a parent to three wonderful kids.”

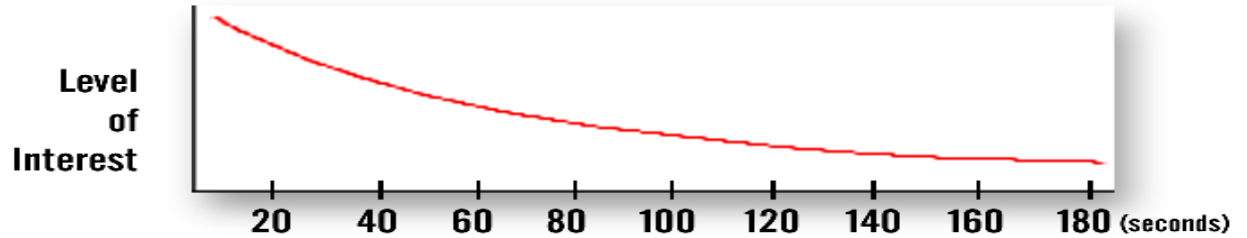
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Techniques: Speaking Effectively

Make Your First Words Count



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Techniques: Speaking Effectively

- Lead with a positive conclusion and then state supporting facts. All other remarks should support your lead statement.

Example: “Long-term recovery is working for millions of Americans...”

- Tell ‘em what your going to tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.

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Techniques: Speaking Effectively

- Be brief – responses to questions should be short; 18-30 second sound bites.
- THE HARD TRUTH: IF IT ISN'T SHORT IT DOESN'T GET USED

“For the first time, the recovery community is speaking in one voice to change the public perception of recovery and to promote effective public policy.”

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Keys to Successful Television Interviews

- Be prepared to make only one point
- Talk as though you were talking with a friend
- Expressions
 - Overemphasize positive expressions (negative characteristics are exaggerated on TV)
 - SMILE

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Pre-Interview

- Make sure you have water
- Introduce yourself to the technicians
- Chat with the interviewer before it starts
 - Make clear what you want to cover
 - Get a sense of what s\he wants to discuss

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Posture and Eye Contact

- Sit as far back in your chair as possible
- Lean slightly forward
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewer

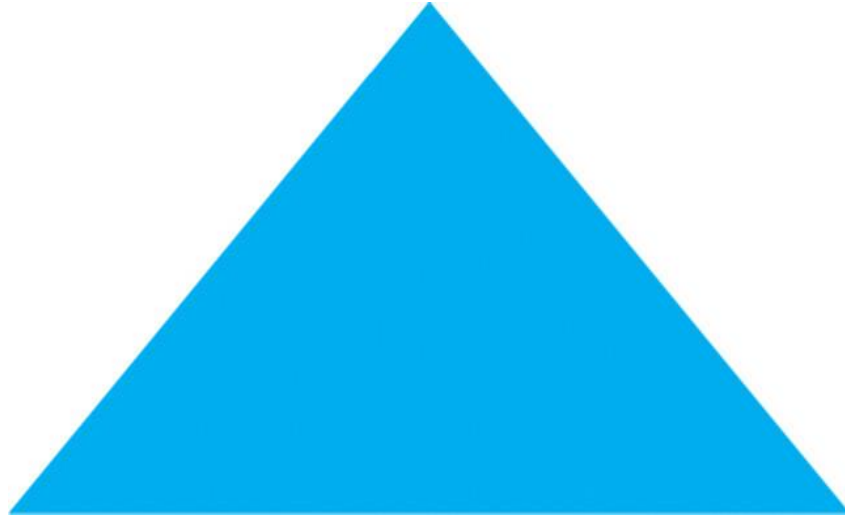
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Physical Gestures

- All gestures should be in the triangle from the bottom of your chin to your lower chest, in the area below your shoulders



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Varied Vocal Patterns

- Highlights points with variation in voice pitch and intensity
- Pause for effect
- Speak slightly slower than normal
- Keep a relaxed informal tone

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Appearance

- Take off nametags and buttons before your interview
- Eyeglasses – If you can, go without them

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Appearance

Men

- Darker suits are best
- Red, maroon or gray ties without distracting patterns are best
- Socks should be same or darker color than suit

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Appearance

Women

- Dress in neutrals and avoid large patterns
- Don't wear big jewelry
- Don't wear too much or too bright lipstick

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Everyone Can Improve

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Keys to Successful Radio Interviews

- Keep your answers short
Generally only one or two sound bites will be used
- If it's a phone interview, stand up
- Be expressive and animated
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace

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Keys to Successful Print Interviews

- While often longer, use only a small portion of what you say gets used
- In the longer format, it's easier to get off track
- Remember your key message and deliver it
- Flag your key messages by saying things like “the most important point” or “what people should really know is”

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Keys to Successful Print Interviews

- Don't let your guard down. Remember anything you say can be included in the story
- Hard questions don't mean that the reporter has taken a side
- If you are unsure of an answer, tell the reporter that you will get back to them

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Summary

- Prepare for your interview
 - Know your key messages
 - Practice
 - Dress appropriately
- Deliver your key messages
- Think about your audience
 - Use your voice
 - Maintain eye contact
- Stay on message

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Conclusion

- Use Faces & Voices recovery messaging to tell your recovery story
- Make it personal
- Use your message in all parts of your life with

Family and friends

Neighbors and co-workers

Media and public officials

Always!

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Trainers

Tom Coderre
Betty Currier

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