

SPEAK UP

**MEDIA MANUAL FOR
COMMUNITY AGENCIES**

New Zealand Government

The Speak Up Media Manual for Community Agencies was originally produced by the government funded It's not OK Campaign when it launched in 2007. It was updated by the Ministry of Justice in 2020.

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Speak up and use the media to prevent family violence.

This manual has been produced to support community agencies to use the news pages and bulletins of their local media to ensure stories about family violence are balanced and accurate. It includes a section on social media.

New Zealand has a very high rate of family violence. Half all homicides each year are

a result of family violence; one in three New Zealand women will experience physical and sexual violence from a partner in their lifetime (Fanslow and Robinson 2004); we have one of the highest rates of non-accidental deaths of children in the Western world.

WHY USE THE MEDIA?

The media has a powerful influence on the way New Zealanders think about and respond to family violence.

It plays an essential role in what people perceive family violence to be and their willingness to talk about it and seek help if it's happening to them or someone they know.

Family violence experts are the people who know most about family violence in New Zealand. They need to be visible and vocal in local and national news media.

News is free. You can talk to and influence New Zealanders through the news media.

Developing key messages

To work with the media effectively, you need strong key messages. These are short, powerful statements that can be used in any medium at any time.

Family violence key messages could be:

- Family violence is not OK
- Family violence hurts children
- Family violence affects all neighbourhoods
- Family violence is not just physical
- We all have a role to play in preventing family violence
- Change is possible – help is available.

Use key messages in all your media activity. People hear strong, clear key messages when we say them over and over again. They need to be messages readers and listeners can relate to and agree with.

Put your key messages on your letterhead and newsletters, on posters and emails, use them on social media.

01

**NEWS MEDIA
OUTLETS**

To be effective in the news media, you need to know who your local news media are and what they are looking for. Each news outlet has its own audience.



Newspapers

Daily newspapers are usually published six days a week. They want fresh news that's happening now such as:

- family violence deaths and incidents
- statistics, these could be about trends in the people coming to your agency, an increase in the type of violence or numbers of people seeking help, any statistics are interesting to the media
- demand for services
- survey and research results
- a visit or speech by an important person
- new plans and strategies
- human interest stories – stories about people and their experiences such as a man who's stopped using violence, a woman who has survived violence and made a new life.

Daily newspapers will have space for features which are longer articles that take an in-depth look at a topic or issue such as a spike in Police call-outs, an increase in use of weapons or cruelty to pets.

Community newspapers are usually published weekly and delivered free to every household in a specific geographical area. They rely heavily on contributions from individuals and organisations in their readership community.

Community newspapers need news which doesn't go out of date over the week such as:

- forthcoming events
- profiles of people and organisations
- programmes
- human interest stories.

Community newspapers are widely read all over New Zealand.



Radio

Radio is the most immediate of all news outlets. It's first with the news and can update stories hourly. Radio wants short sharp news and stories with quotes that are easy to understand and make a point quickly and succinctly – the 10 second sound bite.

New Zealand has one of the highest ratios of radio stations per person in the world.

Radio likes big news events but there are many community stations interested in publicising local events and initiatives and talking to local people about local issues.

NATIONAL RADIO NETWORKS:

If you get your message on to a radio station that is networked it can get broadcast across the country. New Zealand has four radio networks:

- **RNZ (Radio New Zealand)** – state owned with no commercial advertising
- **Newstalk ZB** – commercial network nationwide
- **Magic Talk** – commercial network nationwide
- **Te Whakaruruhau Ngā Reo Irirangi Māori** – state funded radio network for Māori listeners.



Television

Television tells the news with pictures and can bring a story to life with live interviews. Television reporters look for stories with drama that can be told by interviews and pictures such as ambulances, armed offenders, smashed cars, graphic injuries, flashing lights.

News programmes run on the following TV channels:

- TV1
- Newshub
- Prime
- Māori Television.



Websites

New Zealanders are increasingly getting their news off the internet. All major news outlets across all media have websites carrying the latest news with frequent updates.

In addition, there are web-only news sites:

Newsroom is an online news site covering politics, current affairs and social issues

 newsroom.co.nz

The Spinoff is an online commentary and opinion site covering politics, pop culture and social issues

 thespinoff.co.nz

Scoop is an internet news site carrying press releases, news, analysis and opinion pieces

 scoop.co.nz

Voxy is an internet news site covering a range of New Zealand news

 voxy.co.nz

Now to Love is a women's lifestyle website and online home of a suite of women's magazines

 nowtolove.co.nz



Local media contacts

It's a good idea to have all your media contacts and information in one place so you can react quickly when you have a media opportunity.

Set up an email group so you can send media releases out to all your local media instantly.

Put internet news sites into your favourites folder or set up news alerts so you can monitor the news daily and be part of news stories going on locally and nationally.

02

**WHAT IS
NEWS?**

What is news?

The word 'news' comes from the word 'new' so anything which is new has the potential to be interesting and newsworthy for readers and listeners. Journalists use the term news values to identify what makes a topic or person newsworthy:

- It's new

- It's happening – events, new appointments, premises burnt down

- Affects people

- Has local significance

- Names and actions of important people

- Novelty (man bites dog)

- Timeliness

- Conflict

- Human interest/people stories.

Most often you will be able to identify one or more news values in your media activity.

'Sibling Violence on the Increase'

→ **Novelty**

'Family Violence Agencies Reject Plan'

→ **Conflict**

'PM visits Motueka Stopping Violence Agency'

→ **Important people**

'Queenstown has Worst Family Violence Stats'

→ **Local significance**

'Family Violence Reports Hit New High'

→ **Happening now**

The language of news is black and white, bold and simple. News is pitched to a reading age of 12 years. We scan newspapers and magazines, rarely reading every word. When we listen to the radio we are usually doing something else at the same time.

To be effective in the media you need to use the language of the media – bold words, strong statements, colourful quotes.



Men must stop killing their loved ones



Family violence escalation shatters idyllic vision of Queenstown



Violence epidemic has to stop



The best way to stop family violence is to expose it



Violence comes out of homes and on to the streets



Children that are smacked learn that it's ok to hit

How to get into the news

News outlets need news, they need you to tell them when you are doing or saying something newsworthy.

There are two ways to be part of news stories:

→ RESPONDING TO NATIONAL OR LOCAL EVENTS AND NEWS STORIES SUCH AS:

- a family violence homicide
- court reports or judge's comments
- release of statistics or research
- comments by politicians.

→ CREATING THE NEWS BY RELEASING INFORMATION SUCH AS:

- an increase or decrease in people coming to your agency
- success stories from your programmes
- survey results
- new projects or programmes
- new trends in types of family violence.

When you have news you can:

- phone or email a reporter with an idea
- send a media (press) release
- write a letter to the editor
- hold a press conference
- let your local newspapers know about a photo opportunity.

Get to know your local media personnel, developing relationships with reporters is invaluable. Once they know you and what you do, they'll come to you for information and comment on news events. Invite reporters to your meetings, send them your newsletters, make sure they know about events you are part of such as White Ribbon Day or visits by experts.

Writing a media release

A media or press release is the most common way to let the media know about news in your agency or community.

A media release gets the media interested in a story, it doesn't need to tell the whole story. It should make your position clear on an issue or topic and provide people and phone numbers for further information or if the reporter wants fresh quotes for the story.

News outlets get hundreds of media releases a day, so yours needs to stand out to be noticed. Make it newsworthy and easy to read, make strong statements and use colourful language.

A good media release has:

- a strong headline to grab attention
- a clear simple message
- one point per paragraph
- one page only.

It must include:

- the date
- who you are
- what qualifies you to speak out
- what your organisation does
- contact details.

Use:

- your key messages
- statistics
- examples
- quotes.



Writing a letter to the editor

A letter to the editor is an expression of opinion by a person or organisation. You can be colourful and opinionated in a letter to the editor. You can use it to compliment or criticise a news outlet, to make a statement on an issue or to recount a personal experience.

Keep letters to the editor short, otherwise they'll be shortened by the editor. Most newspapers give a maximum word count on their letters page.

 betterpublicmedia.org.nz/get-involved1/letter-editor

03

**USING SOCIAL
MEDIA**

Many people now get their news via social media rather than traditional news media. It's important to get your message out on social media channels too.



Facebook

Facebook communications will be seen almost entirely by people who already follow your page and are engaged with your message. This means you can go into more detail and share links, without having to 'grab' people's attention.

Regular engagement with supporters is a positive way to build interaction and maintain transparency.

Facebook comments should be monitored regularly. Because your followers are people who have actively 'liked' and followed your page, potentially damaging comment will have a much greater impact. It will automatically be visible and attached to your post for all to see.

Video content is prioritised on a user's timeline. Key tips for video content on Facebook are:

- keep it short and to the point – up to 60 seconds
- you have 3 seconds to stop someone scrolling past your content
- boosting video content via paid advertising is the best way to increase reach and engagement
- always use subtitles – most people using Facebook don't turn the sound on.

To boost content, you put some money behind a post for a specified amount of time and it will be boosted to a greater number of Facebook feeds.

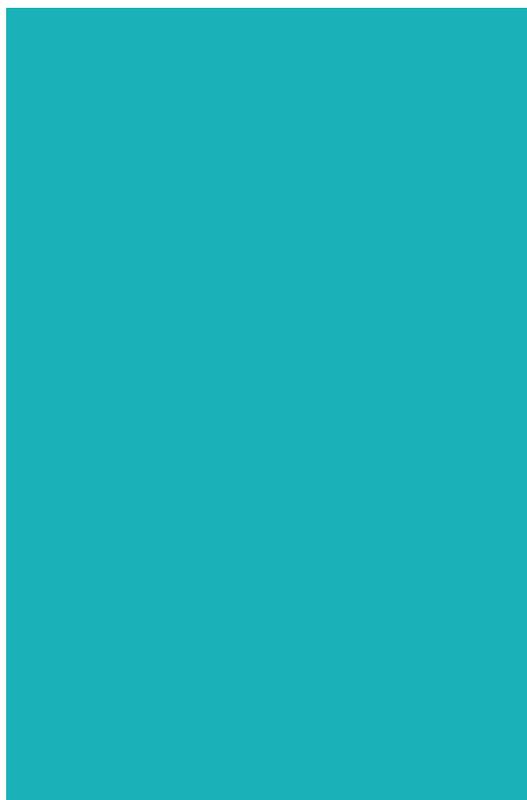


Twitter

Twitter is a bit like radio – fast, immediate and brief. It's good for being part of issues of the day and making contact with journalists and news outlets. Keep tweets topical, short and to the point.

Use hashtags to be relevant. Hashtags and keywords are often how people are introduced to new tweets and new accounts, so using words likely to be searched or words currently trending is a good way to have impact. It's worth checking what is trending before choosing what message to tweet.

For example, the below were 'trending' in New Zealand on 21/02/2020 – linking any of the below words into tweets ('Māori', 'New Zealander', 'LGBT') will instantly have much more visibility than they would otherwise, as people will be clicking into what's trending, and seeing the feed of everyone using those words.





Instagram

Instagram is an image-focused platform with a largely younger audience. It provides the opportunity for a creative approach.

The platform has three aspects:

01

FEED

This is where you post images you want to be long term. You can add a caption and use hashtags to link with other similar content.

You can use the layout of your feed creatively – use colour themes or spread the image over multiple posts.

You can get the best engagement by posting at a consistent time of day and only posting once a day. Posting content too close together minimises the number of people who see and engage with it.

02

INSTAGRAM STORIES

A story only lasts for 24 hours and is a good way to engage your audience on a day-to-day basis.

There are lots of extra features you can use such as polls, ask-a-question, quizzes or a countdown timer.

You can use a mix of images, text, video and boomerangs (mini-videos that play forward and back).

If you want a story to last longer than 24 hours you can add it to your highlights, this is a good way to promote an event, show your brand or get a certain message across. Each highlight can have up to 100 stories in it and people can view these at any time.

03

IGTV

This is the newest aspect of Instagram and gives you more options for using video content.

Hashtags are important on Instagram but beware of banned or over-used hashtags. Using too many hashtags can get your account banned – you can google updated lists of banned hashtags.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is another way to let people know what you are doing and join discussions. It has space for longer posts than some other sites, so you can tell more of a story than just a headline.

The primary audience on LinkedIn is businesses and professionals so the emphasis is on work-related news and issues.

The use of imagery can boost reach and engagement. Infographics, landscape images and video work well.

Make your messages as easy to read as possible with plenty of white space. People want content which is broken up into manageable chunks rather than one block of text.

Click-through links work well and can be incorporated into a post. This counts as engagement and therefore drives your engagement ratio up, which then pushes the content out to more people and greater reach.

Add a link to your post and it will automatically come up with a click-through picture at the bottom of your post. You can edit this and replace with a more engaging picture and text.



YouTube

YouTube can be a great way to interact with people. Once videos are on YouTube, they can be shared across other platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, immediately increasing their impact and encouraging more people to subscribe to your YouTube channel.

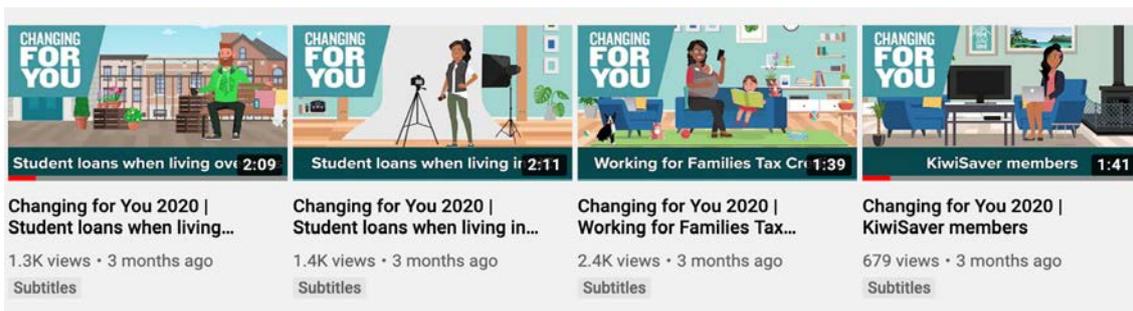
If your videos gain enough views they may begin to show up in the sidebar of people who watch similar videos.

Make sure you have engaging thumbnails – don't pick any frame offered when you are uploading the video, it's better to create a specific thumbnail that has words on it explaining what the video is about. Look at the 'trending' tab for more ideas, scroll down and look at the pictures on the videos and see what engages people and catches attention.

Remember your thumbnail will be competing against all other videos in the 'recommended' section so make sure it stands out. It will also represent the video when you share it on Twitter or Facebook and people take only seconds to decide whether a video is worth watching.

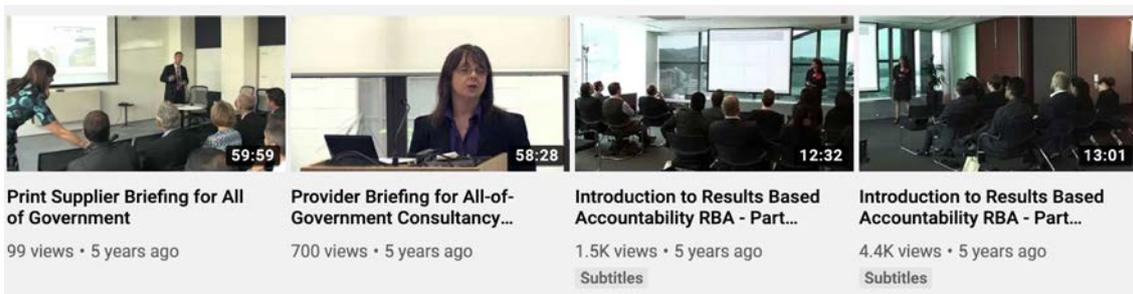
GREAT THUMBNAILS

Engaging, professional, click-able and relevant



BAD THUMBNAILS

Random, 'stills' from the video itself, bland and non-descript.



04

MEDIA

INTERVIEWS



Dos and don'ts

DO:

- always call reporters back or they'll call someone else
- know what you are going to say. Practice with a colleague, don't be hurried by the reporter, take 10 minutes to prepare
- if you don't want to answer a question have a refusal ready "I'm sorry I don't have the information to answer that question". Saying 'no comment' makes you sound uncooperative, like you have something to hide.

DON'T:

- go off the record. This is when you give information to the reporter on the understanding they won't use it
- lie or give information or figures you aren't sure about
- give an interview if you've been drinking
- comment on other organisations or people, speak for your own organisation only.

Be prepared

Being interviewed by a reporter, whether it is for radio, television or a newspaper article, takes us out of our comfort zone. Being prepared is essential.

Here is a checklist of steps to follow. When a reporter calls don't do an interview blind – get as much information as you can before you start. Ask:

-
- What news outlet are you from?
-
- Is the interview live or pre-recorded? (for radio and TV). You need to know this because a live interview can't be changed, a pre-recorded interview will be edited down to a few sound bites.
-
- What news programme is it for?
-
- What issue do you want to discuss?
-
- Who else have you spoken to?
-
- If you agree to be interviewed, always take 10 minutes to prepare. This gives you time to have your key messages ready and be sure of what you want to say in the interview, so you don't get caught saying something unplanned.
-
- Imagine the worst question the reporter could ask you and have an answer ready.
-
- Keep your answers short – longer answers will get edited or summarised.
-
- Use colourful and interesting language.
-
- Give facts and examples.
-
- Remember who your audience is – local or national, specialised or general.
-

