

Questions You Might Have

What if they ask a question that I do not want to answer? A reporter may ask you a question that you do not want to answer. It is perfectly OK to say, "I would rather not answer that" or "I am just not comfortable answering that question." Most reporters will respect this and back off.

What if I start to cry? Speaking about your child and family can be emotional. Some reporters like emotion and feel it is what appeals to their readers or listeners. But, the real question is how do YOU feel about being seen or heard reacting emotionally?

If you feel comfortable, then work through the emotion and try to keep moving on with the interview. If you feel that you would rather not show emotion, then ask the reporter to stop and give you a few minutes alone. If it is a live television show, the best you can do is collect your-self and try to focus on the next question.

How can I help others understand the impact of having a child or youth with special health care needs without looking like I am asking for everyone to feel sorry for me? The best way is to talk about your dreams and hopes for your child and family and what it will take to help you reach those dreams. It is important that others do not see your situation as hopeless, but that they understand that support and resources can help your child or youth and family meet the future.



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So....

**SOMEONE
WANTS TO INTERVIEW YOU**

Maybe it is for a radio show or a local newspaper. Or, possibly they are bringing cameras to your home to tape an interview for television. Whatever the purpose, interviews can be a powerful way to share your experiences and help others understand what you and other families like yours need.

Being prepared can help you make the most of this opportunity.

This pamphlet includes information, tips, and resources to make your interview as painless as possible and a true success as you advocate for families of children and youth with special health care needs.



*Planting seeds of involvement for
families*

Before the Interview



Ask for the name, publication or broadcast date and their phone.

Ask what their story is about and how you can help them?

Ask when their deadline is.

Return phone calls from reporters promptly. Reporters need a response in minutes, not hours or days.

Find out whom they want present during the interview. Do they want you or would they like your whole family? Would they like to take pictures or film your child with special needs?

If the story is about your youth with special needs, get their permission before agreeing to participation.

Talk with the reporter about the interview before it starts. Find out what the questions will be so you can prepare your responses.



During the Interview....

Always tell the truth.

Don't assume that you will see the reporter's story before it is published or broadcasted.

Avoid using medical language.

If you don't know an answer, say so.

Mention "children with special health care needs" several times during the interview, rather than saying "it" or "they".

Be flexible, natural and try to avoid reading information.

Assume you are being recorded at all times.

Keep responses brief, but long enough to help the reporter get a quote.

Politely correct inaccurate facts. Don't allow the reporter to put words in your mouth and never argue.

After you have finished answering a question, don't keep speaking. Dead air (silence) is the reporter's problem, not yours.

If the interview is being taped, ask to start an answer over if you blow it. Don't say "no comment." Explain why you choose to not comment

Talk clearly in short phases. Try to not talk too fast.

Don't be rushed into answering. Just pause, think... and then answer.

Don't look into the camera. Instead, look at whomever is talking.

Dark clothes look best on TV. Blue shirts look better than white. Avoid checkered shirts

After the Interview

Thank the reporter for caring about your family and others enough to cover the story.

Invite the reporter to call you back for further clarification or additional information if needed.

If you're misquoted, contact the reporter, not the editor and try to correct the misunderstanding.