



ncal[®] **National Center
for Assisted Living**

Your National Assisted Living Leader for Advocacy,
Knowledge, Education and Professional Development

NCAL's Media Guide for Assisted Living Communities

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Introduction:

Why Get Your Assisted Living Community In The News?

There are many benefits to generating or being part of a news story. Media exposure plays an important role in defining and establishing the perception of the assisted living profession, its leaders, and residents.

NCAL developed this guide to help assisted living communities interact and earn positive media exposure, maintain good relationships with local media outlets, and explain how to handle a media crisis.

One chapter is devoted to interviews. It can help the community's spokesperson prepare for an interview, what questions to expect, how to develop answers, identify the different types of reporter encounters, and learn what to wear on camera.

In addition, there is a section on the newest form of public relations—social media. This guide defines what social media is, what to consider, and how to incorporate social media into your media plan for the community. Simply stated, having your community included in a local news story is the most cost-effective way to achieve publicity.

Part One: Fundamentals

Overview of What Makes News

“News” is a new development, an event, a crisis, an accident, severe weather, or local reaction to a national or state story about a new law, a policy, or a trend. News stories can also be classified as “human interest,” which are stories about unique people and their achievements, unusual places, or things.

Who Makes The Decision About Stories To Cover?

Editors, bureau chiefs, producers and assignment editors determine what developments, human interest, or events are the most newsworthy. Editors make the news decisions in cooperation with their editorial teams and reporters and in accordance with their news cycles—such as immediate or breaking news, hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly.

The editors and producers also consider other factors:

- Is the information unique, local, and visual?
- How important is the information to the audience on an emotional, financial, legal or other basis?
- How many people does it impact?

Editors and producers are important contacts for you because in order for you to talk to them about your community’s activities and events, it’s important to understand their decision making process and to be respectful of their deadlines when you call them, or when they contact you.

When you get local media to cover an event or include a quote from the community’s spokesperson, you need to know that you cannot control the outcome of the story. There may be some instances when you have been interviewed and then not included in the story. Or your community may pitch a positive story and the reporter includes an opposing or controversial opinion. Many news stories contain conflict or controversy. In these instances, reporters should

News is defined as new information about anything; information previously unknown; or any person or thing thought to merit special attention.”

—Webster’s New World Dictionary.

be interviewing people representing different sides, but in some cases they don't and only represent one side of a story. While you can't control the story, being prepared, and providing useful answers is the best you can do to ensure your community is portrayed positively.

The Basics

Develop a Media Policy for Your Community

In order to manage the flow of information to local news organizations, the assisted living community should designate primary and back-up spokespersons, and develop an employee policy regarding staff members speaking with the media. The policy should be clear that only certain people are authorized to speak with the media and if staff is contacted by media, to direct the media to the spokesperson. Appendix A is a sample media policy that can be used as a template for your community. (The policy also addresses employees' use of e-mail or public communication on the Internet such as FaceBook, YouTube, and Twitter. Social Media will be addressed in Part Five.)

Once developed, be sure to educate and train staff members on your community's media policies and procedures about how to handle a reporter or producer's phone call or e-mail. NCAL recommends inserting the media policy into the employee handbook.

Identify Staff Spokespeople and Explain Responsibilities

The community should identify at least two staff members to be spokespeople, especially during crisis situations. One person should be the primary contact and another person should be designated as a backup. Spokespersons should be staff members who are familiar with all the community's operations, policies, and procedures. They should also be willing to receive media calls outside of normal business hours. The spokespeople are the "public face" of the assisted living community.

If you have an activity director who is regularly involved with the media on community events, etc., he or she may best be able to fill the spokesperson's role. In any case, recognize that the administrator or wellness director may not always be the best spokesperson. It may be another individual on staff.

TIP:

Make the spokesperson's phone numbers available so that staff members know who to contact and how to contact that person.

After identifying the spokespeople, post their contact information, such as office and cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses in a place where staff can access their contact information to give to reporters should they answer a phone call or e-mail from the media.

The spokespeople should be responsible for answering basic questions from the media about the care and services of the community. They should also be prepared to express the viewpoints and philosophy of the community's owner or operators. Spokespeople should contact the NCAL state affiliate's communications director to learn about the state's advocacy issues and receive "talking points," if available and appropriate. For example: Does the state have a Medicaid program for assisted living? If so, the spokespeople should be able to explain that Medicaid pays for services and doesn't pay for room and board.

The community's spokespeople should also consider reading, watching and monitoring the local media to see if there are opportunities to promote the community.

Develop a Media Plan

Develop a media plan and start with these few basic steps:

- 1) Consider forming a team comprised of the community's owner, executive director or administrator, community outreach, marketing representative, activity director, and a clinical person if possible.
- 2) Have the team members make a list of events and story ideas that they want to publicize, include any statewide assisted living advocacy issues. (Ask your NCAL state affiliate communications director for the issues.)
- 3) Develop a Set Of Key Messages:
Key messages are a set of two or three points the community wants to effectively communicate in a media interview. Each message should be followed by two or three statements that support or explain each key message. The key messages should be simple and easy to refer to during media interviews. Use the community's mission statement to develop messages about quality and service.

Once you have finished developing the key messages, test the messages on someone unfamiliar with the community, such as a friend or family member. If that person has difficulty understanding your messages, revise the messages until they are clear and convincing.

4) Make a comprehensive list of the radio, television, newspapers, or websites covering your area. Appendix B “Key Media Contacts” is a list identifying the titles of your key media contacts. Use the list to guide your collection of the names and contact information for your key media contacts. Also be sure to ask the contacts if they prefer to be reached by phone or e-mail.

5) Develop the action plan for your community’s media plan. The action plan identifies your media objectives and provides a schedule of actions to be taken and who will carry out those actions.

6) Create a media kit that provides basic information to a reporter or producer about your community’s care and services. The media kit should include the following:

- A ‘backgrounder,’ is a single page that includes the history of the community, the mission or philosophy, the date established, community size, and the care and services provided by your assisted living community, achievements, and professional associations.
- A brief separate letter from an executive leadership of the community, with contact information for the spokesperson.
- A short professional biography of owner(s), or administrator (s) with headshot(s)
- A press release about an event, milestone or whatever is the “news”.
- A business card.
- Reprints of articles that the community has appeared in.

If possible, prepare a hard copy and an electronic copy for the media outlets and reporters.

TIP:

Practicing key messages makes it easier for spokespeople to say them when interviewed by reporters.

TIP:

Use your community’s marketing brochure to provide information for the backgrounder.

8) Spokespeople should know basic statistics about the assisted living community:

- the number of residents,
- the number of units,
- the number of employees,
- The average cost per unit by month and year for a person residing in your assisted living community.
- Obtain national statistics from NCAL.org, click on “Media Resources.” [See Assisted Living Resident Profile](#) and [Assisted Living Facility Profile](#).

Part Two: Earning Publicity in Local Media

Getting Media's Attention

There are many ways to contact the local media. In order to increase your chances of obtaining media coverage, you have to determine the story angle of your pitch to the media. This process is known as developing the news hook.

Develop the "News Hook"

You want a "news hook" that will grab the attention of the editor, a reporter, or producer. You can do that by appealing to their audience or need for certain types of stories or information.

Audiences and the media are interested in issues that affect them and their families, such as aging, community, environment, health, lifestyle, interpersonal relationships, how to save or make money. Develop a story angle that appeals to them and you'll increase the chances of getting coverage.

Listed below are categories and examples provided to demonstrate the development of the news hook.

Categories:

Events: Publicize an upcoming event such as your community's celebration of National Assisted Living Week, or the local high school choir giving a performance at your community. Also tie your community's celebrations of national holidays or religious celebrations, such as Veterans Day, Fourth of July, Christmas, or Hanukkah. (If the media doesn't show up to your event, you can send a photograph with a caption to the publication with a note stating "Sorry, you couldn't make it ..." Never be angry in the follow-up note.)

Notable Visitors: Is a public official, local or national actor, singer, or speaker planning a visit to your community? Make sure you publicize their visit.

Public Interest/Relevance: Using this story angle means your community's spokespeople will provide expertise on an issue being discussed in the news or on local talk shows. For example, the state legislature is going to cut Medicaid funding for assisted living programs, the spokesperson can discuss the impact the community's assisted living residents. Maybe a radio station is doing a talk show on aging, long term care or a current issue relating to long term care. If so, inject yourself and your expertise into the discussion.

Other news hooks can be developed around human interest, national trends, photo or video opportunities. Make sure you have obtained permission from residents and staff to take photographs or video of them.

Methods of Contacting the Media

There are many methods of contacting news organizations. Below is a list and description of the methods for contacting local news organizations.

Media Advisory: A media advisory or media alert is a one-page summary that notifies media outlets about an upcoming event or news conference shortly before the event occurs. It should contain the “who, what, where, when and why” of the event. The advisory should be sent two or three days in advance. Keep the advisory brief and don’t reveal too much. Follow up with phone calls to the media outlets pitching the event. See Appendix C, Sample Media Advisory.

Press Releases: A press release is a standard document that announces your news. Try to limit the press release to one page, two pages at the most if absolutely necessary. The release should be written to convey the story exactly as you would like it to appear in print, on your website, or on the local news organization’s website. It’s most likely going to appear in local newspapers, be read on a local radio broadcast or posted on a media website as you wrote it. See Appendix D, Sample Press Release.

The lead is an introductory paragraph that includes the news hook and consists of one or two sentences answering the following questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

If you have photographs or graphics that are available to the media, include a sentence in the press release that states that images are available upon request. (Make sure the residents and employees have given permission for the community to use their images.) When you’re finished writing the press release, check your facts and spelling. Once it’s finalized, have it posted on the home page of your website. Now you are ready for distribution to your local media outlets. Reminder: Issue a press release on the day of the event.

TIP:

Avoid using technical terms or jargon in a press release.

Also avoid editorializing or using adjectives or superlatives.

Write simply and in the active voice.

Announcements: Many newspapers have sections dedicated to announcing local events; business sections contain announcements about new hires and promotions. Contact the section editor and ask for how to submit information, and then submit it.

Letters to the Editor: A letter to the editor is a short response to a published story in a newspaper or magazine. Often it can also be used to highlight a positive aspect of a story or to establish yourself as an expert on senior issues in your community. Make sure you write the letter in two to three paragraphs. Do not disparage individuals or the newspaper. Be constructive if you're being critical. Include a one sentence reference to the article that your letter is referring too. Make sure you send within one to two days of story publication.

Op-Ed: Op-Ed is short for "opposing—editorial" page. Op-eds are used in response to a publication's editorial or to express an opinion about an issue. The piece should include a complete argument. Contact your NCAL state affiliate and NCAL public affairs director for assistance in drafting an op-ed.

Pitching Your News

Below is a description of the steps to take when inviting media to cover your community event. A majority of this description focuses on using media advisories or press releases because many local news organizations have processes for submitting professional announcements, calendar items, letters to the editor, or opposing-editorials (op-ed). Check their websites or call the organizations to find out how to submit those particular announcements.

Two to three days before an event, such as a local school performance, send a media advisory via e-mail to your key contacts. Also have a prepared press release which will be sent on the day of the event.

A day after sending the media advisory, follow up with a phone call. At the beginning of the call ask if the editor or reporter is on deadline. If they answer "yes," ask when would be a good time to call back.

During this phone call, make the pitch interesting by being short and to the point. Share the most relevant details in the first moments of the telephone conversation. You can use the con-

TIP:

When writing an op-ed, ask yourself the following questions:

Do I have something to say?

Am I going being viewed as an assisted living expert?

Why am I qualified to speak on this issue?

Can I include one or two statistics to back up my points?

tents media advisory as the contents of your “pitch.” Before the phone call is finished, offer to resend details of the event. Ask the editor, producer, or reporter which method they prefer. (Today, many reporters prefer e-mail.)

On the day of the event, issue a press release. Before distributing it to your key media contacts, be sure to have it posted on your community’s website.

Do not be disappointed if press did not attend your event. Many times other news draws media coverage. You can send an e-mail and in the body of the e-mail insert the text of the press release with a note saying you have photographs available.

Part Three: All About Interviews

The Successful Interview

A successful interview may be best defined as an interview where you clearly deliver your key messages. The way to accomplish this is to be prepared. If you don't have a clear sense of what you want to convey, how the headline should read, and what you want people to know about your issue, then the chance that you will be satisfied with the result of the interview is slim.

To avoid mistakes, practice interviewing using your developed messages. All spokespeople for your organization should be familiar with and proficient in delivering messages. Remember: part of getting out messages successfully is picking the right spokesperson. Certain spokespeople will resonate better with your target audience than others.

Tips for Successful Interviews That Incorporate Key Messages

To conduct successful interviews you will need to know what your key messages are and follow these rules:

Rule 1: Don't have more than three main points. (See Box: Developing Messages)

Rule 2: Messages themselves are not necessarily sub points that contain sound bites, they are ideas you are trying to get across.

Rule 3: Messages are reinforced by sub points that contain sound bites, phrases, statistics and anecdotes.

Rule 4: For messages to have impact they have to be repeated over and over again.

Rule 5: Messages can be tailored for specific audiences, while still remaining constant. (See Rule 4)

Rule 6: Consistent messages should permeate all of your communications efforts, not just your media interviews and communications.

Rule 7: Messages must be simple. They are ideas that can be explained in a sentence or two.

Developing Messages for an Interview

Reminder: As an assisted living provider, you want to frame the answer with the needs of the residents and families first.

1. What information does the interviewer want to know from you?
 - a. **Example:** A reporter wants to know about the new Tai Chi program in your community and what your residents think about the program.
2. Choose three points you want to make about the topic?
 - a. **Message:** Residents taking Tai Chi improve their physical health and outlook.
 - i. **Subpoint 1:** Discuss statistics on the benefits of seniors taking Tai Chi classes that show improved flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular benefits.
 - ii. **Subpoint 2:** The Tai Chi class began a result of residents wanting to try some new exercise classes.
 - b. **Message:** Residents are reporting less pain in their joints, increased mobility, as a result of their Tai Chi exercises, and enjoy the class.
 - i. **Subpoint 1:** Mrs. Dale loves Tai Chi. She went from not exercising at all to attending the twice weekly class. She tells us she has reduced the pain in her knees. She would be happy to tell you about her experiences.
 - ii. **Subpoint 2:** Many residents have begun practicing their Tai Chi exercises daily to stay more limber.
 - iii. **Subpoint 3:** Because the demand is so great from residents, we are adding a second Tai Chi class.
 - c. **Message:** The Tai Chi classes are just one example of the modern programs we have to help our residents live their lives to the fullest.
 - i. **Subpoint 1:** Our residents have adopted a local kindergarten class to help the kids learn to read.
 - ii. **Subpoint 2:** Residents are pet sitters to kittens and puppies from the local shelter to help socialize them with human beings so they are more adoptable.

How To Answer A Question

What and Why

In order to send your message through the media to your audience, it's vital that you explain what you are doing and why. It is the "why" portion of an answer that will make the emotional connection with an audience.

For example, when asked his/her profession, a person could say "I am responsible for delivering care and services to residents."

A better answer is restated here: "My main focus is to meet each resident's needs in a manner the resident prefers and that respects each individual's dignity."

What listeners want to hear is how the service benefits them or their family member not the actual job of the caregiver. When answering any question, the interviewee must consider who the audience is and what they care about.

What to Do When You Don't Know the Answer:

It's okay to say, you don't know the answer. Here's how to respond, "I don't know, but I'll find out." When the interview is finished, find out the answer and let the reporter know as soon as possible.

What to Do When You Know the Answer But Can't Say:

There may be some instances when reporters ask you questions that you know the answer to but because of your community's policies or possibly violating resident's privacy you are prevented from answering with full transparency. When you respond, use the word "because" in your explanation. (Tip): Remember don't say "no comment." See the sections on "Learn To Bridge—Handling Challenging Interviews," and the box called, "Bridging to the Positive."

For example, "Because of privacy rules, I cannot divulge the health status of our residents."

The key word here is **BECAUSE**.

What To Say When Something Has Gone Wrong With Your Community: If contacted by a reporter about “bad news,” remember to remain calm. Don’t be forced into responding and answering questions immediately, especially if you don’t have all the facts. If reporters or camera crews show up for an on-the-spot interview, escort them to a room and ask them to remain there while you collect your thoughts and prepare for an interview. You don’t want them roaming through the community and interviewing other staff or residents.

Anytime a resident is hurt, your answers should focus on your concern for the resident’s quick recuperation and or your cooperation with authorities. Also anticipate the reporter’s negative questions, and how to convey the answers in a positive light. Interviewers always seem to hone in on negatives, so don’t restate a reporter’s negative words or phrases in your answers.

Do not volunteer information unless you have facts to back them up. Remember, everything you talk about during the interview is “on-the-record.” Don’t offer to go “off-the-record.” Don’t be evasive. Don’t say “no comment,” because it implies guilt. Remember you want to speak simply, factually, and calmly. See Part Five Crisis Communications to developing how to respond to a crisis.

What to Say When Something Has Gone Wrong With Someone Else’s Community: If contacted by a reporter about a bad news incident that happened at another community, the reporter is looking for a quote that makes the other community look bad. You don’t want to make your community look better by stating, “That would never happen here.” You also should not speculate on what might have gone wrong at that other community. For more explanations, see “Types of Questions You May Encounter” and “Learn to Bridge—Handling Challenging Interviews”

Bridging to the Positive

Example of a Negative Point	Example of Affirmative Points
1. A resident with dementia is missing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We are concerned about the well-being of this individual and working with authorities to locate her as quickly as possible through the Silver Alert program.2. Our residents with dementia live in apartments that have secured exits, and we check those doors regularly to make sure they are in proper working order.3. Police and our staff are searching for the resident and we are asking for everyone's help. If you see Mrs. Smith, please call the police toll free hotline: 800-555-5555.
2. Resident falls in residence and is seriously injured and a reporter has heard about the incident from the family.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. First let me express our sympathy on behalf of our staff and the company. We are deeply saddened by this incident and hoping for the resident's swift recovery.2. We are committed to reducing the risks of our residents falling. We train our caregivers in falls reduction every year.3. Our community's works with the state coalition Falls Prevention Quality Coalition.

Types of Reporter Encounters

Most reporters attempt to be fair in their reporting. But you may encounter reporters that use different reporting tactics such as:

Hostile: If a reporter is hostile toward you, stay calm and don't take it personally. Control your emotions, if you respond with hostility, it will show up in the article or on television.

Bait & Switch: Some reporters will tell you they want to talk about one topic and then switch to another. If you are not prepared to talk about the "other" topic, say so. Promise to do the interview (soon) after you have proper time to get the necessary facts and or information about the subject.

Aggressive: Let the reporter be aggressive, but stick to your message and don't let it affect your demeanor.

Persistent: If they keep asking you the same questions over and over, simply answer them over and over. Say it differently but stick to your answer.

Rapid Fire: Some reporters will ask multiple questions at once. When this happens, answer the questions one at a time. When finished with one question, you can ask the reporter to restate the second question by asking, "Now, what was your next question?"

Charming: There are two types of charming reporters. Both types may be the most difficult to handle. One type is charming until the interview, and then they turn hostile. This could catch you by surprise, but don't let it. The other type is always charming. You relax with them and they become your friend. Then, often, you tell them more than you should, or stray from your planned messages because you are not concentrating. Remember, reporters are not your friends or your enemies. They are reporters trying to get the full story.

Interrupting: Reporters may interrupt an answer with a new question. If you feel your answer is important and the interruption interferes with your right to get your point across, politely insist on finishing your answer and then address the new question.

Types of Questions You May Encounter

Softball Question: It's called a softball question because it's lobbed in and you should hit a homerun every time.

Hypothetical Question: These are often questions such as, "what would happen if...?" No one can see into the future, so never speculate! Stick to the facts. See the "Learn to Bridge" section to learn how to answer these questions with your positive points.

False Premise (or assumptions): "So, your company is responsible for half of all negligence claims ..." Never repeat allegations – they may end up in a story with a negative feel. Perhaps Richard Nixon offers the best example. He repeated a famous allegation and is remembered for it. Had he said, "I am honest" instead of "I am not a crook," he might be remembered a bit differently today.

Putting Words into Your Mouth. Some reporters will attempt to make a statement for you by saying it then asking for your agreement. Reporters who say "so what you're saying is ..." are doing one of two things. They may be asking permission to quote you in the words they are saying. Or, you are hearing THEIR interpretation of what you have just said. Make sure it is 100 percent correct. If it is not 100 percent correct, restate what you mean to say.

Pauses and "And?" Reporters often allow you to finish an answer and then say nothing. Or they might say, as if you are hiding something, "And?" If you are finished speaking, you are under no obligation to continue. If there is a long pause and you have finished your statement, your best bet is to say nothing. Other options include asking the reporter if he/she has any more questions.

Learn To "Bridge"—Handling Challenging Interviews

Challenging interviews are unavoidable. While they can certainly be uncomfortable, it's important to learn to hold your own in a difficult situation, letting your messages and key points come through.

It's important to remember no matter what type of reporter you encounter, and what type of questions you are asked, your answers are – in essence – the same. Always give a brief, direct answer, and follow up with your messages and positive points to back up the answer. This is called "Bridging."

Here are some examples of effective bridges. Use the bridges to connect to your key messages.

Effective Bridges:

- What's important to remember is ...
- Before we move on to another subject, I want to add ...
- Even more important ...
- Your viewers / listeners / audience / readers should also remember ...
- The reality is ...
- There is more to the story, specifically ...
- You make a good point there, but our main consideration was ...

Instead of "no comment," bridge by saying:

- I don't know the exact number, but I can tell you ...
- I don't know; I'll be happy to help you find out, but what's important here is ...
- I'm afraid that information about the resident is confidential, but I can tell you ...

Take control by reversing a negative. If the reporter says something that detracts from your message, you can say:

- I don't think that's the critical point here. What we need to look at ...

Handling Requests for Interviews

When accepting an interview, you have the right to ask the following questions to help you prepare for the interview and set the ground rules with the interviewer. You can use all or some of the questions depending on the situation.

Questions to Ask When the Reporter is on the Phone:

- **What is the story about?** By asking this question you are determining the reporter's story and the angle which helps you prepare the information that the reporter needs. You can ask reporters to provide you with questions. However, you probably won't get the exact questions but you'll get an idea of the types of questions the reporter will ask. If the reporter's questions are outside your area of expertise be sure to tell the reporter.

- **What is your deadline?** This is critical. If you cannot make the reporter’s deadline, then tell him or her.
- **How long is the interview?** An interview may need to be five minutes or five hours. You can set the length of the interview, especially if you are busy or if other reporters also want to interview you. Whatever time you allot for the interview expect the interview to go slightly longer than you plan but do not feel obligated to go on forever.
- **Where will the interview take place?** The most common place for a newspaper or radio reporter to conduct an interview is over the telephone. But the best location is different for each medium.
- **Who will conduct the interview?** It is important to know who will conduct the interview because you want to find out something about them, especially if you are not familiar with their work. Make sure to do some quick research about what topics the reporter recently worked on. Some reporters also have reputations of being tough or nice. Some are ill-prepared and the like.
- **What kind of information are you looking for?**
- **Who else will be interviewed?**
- **Will this be a live interview?** If you are talking with radio or television stations, be sure to ask if the interview is “live” or will it be pre-recorded.
- **Can I give you some background on assisted living?** How much a reporter knows about what you do will vary from nothing to an extensive knowledge of you, your organization, your business, and your field? Whatever the reporter’s skill level, provide them with background information. It could be provided (via e-mail or fax) prior to the interview or given verbally before the start of the formal interview or a combination of both. Providing information to reporters on paper can minimize the possibility of errors.

Tip:

For radio and on-camera interviews, keep your answers to about seven seconds.

Interviewees' Relationship with the Audience through Video and Audio

People being interviewed for television or radio broadcasts need to be aware of how their voice delivers the message and how a person's mannerisms or the way they dress also convey a message to the audience. Following are some tips to consider when preparing for interviews for radio or broadcast.

Voice:

- Volume – Don't use loudness to make a point,
- Clarity – Speak so you will be understood.
- Speed – Too fast and listeners can't follow you. Too slow and you become boring.
- Emotion – It's vital that your voice reflect your interest and concern about the topic.

Eye Contact:

- Good eye contact is important for convincing the viewer of your credibility. Wandering eyes may represent deceit or confusion. When on television, maintain eye contact with the reporter asking the question. Even with a print reporter, maintain solid eye contact. Some reporters assume shifty eyes signal shifty thoughts.

Gestures and the Eye:

- You use gestures in normal everyday situations, so you should use them in interviews as well.

Open Face: Keep your eyebrows up and smile when appropriate.

Getting Mad: Never, ever do this!

Mannerisms for On-Camera Interviews

Do not repeat mannerisms.

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit with legs together or crossed at the knee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross your legs at the ankle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit up straight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fold your arms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make fists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your hands folded in your lap or on arms of chair when not talking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dig fingers into the arm of your chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your head perpendicular to your shoulders to add authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap fingers, fiddle with pencils, jiggle legs, slouch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay attention to the person who is talking (mentally and visually) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swivel back and forth on a swivel chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep an open face and smile when appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strike an overly casual pose
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke, sit with legs spread, put hands in pockets.

Specifically For Women:

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit with legs together or crossed at the knee or ankle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross your legs if your skirt is short
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coyly tilt your head
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have purse visible

For suggestions on what to and what not to wear, [click here](#).

Part Four: Crisis Communications

“Crisis is defined here as an event that can have negative consequences if not handled properly. In crisis management, the threat is the potential damage a crisis can inflict on an organization, its stakeholders, and an industry.

A crisis can create three related threats: (1) resident safety, (2) financial loss, and (3) reputation loss.

–W. Timothy Coombs, Ph. D., Institute for Public Relations.

The key ingredient for dealing effectively with crisis management is through the development of a plan before any crisis occurs. If a crisis does occur, it is critical that your community respond quickly and deal with the situation head-on, speak transparently, and deliver answers in an organized manner. Your community will want to release a statement within an hour of being contacted by the media. Communities dealing with a crisis effectively can preserve and even enhance their reputation in the public eye.

Long Term Crisis Preparation Best Practices

- Develop a crisis management plan and review it annually.
- Designate a crisis management team.
- Annually conduct a drill to test the plan and team.
- Pre-draft select crisis management messages include content for web sites and templates for crisis statements.
- Have the community attorney review and pre-approve these messages.

Source: Coombs.

The Crisis Management Plan

The crisis management plan should include policies on how and who is designated to talk with the media, the surrounding community, residents, families, and your staff. Everyone on staff should be aware of who the authorized spokespeople are and how to contact them.

Establish a list of key contact information, and reminders of what typically should be done in a crisis.

The key contacts list should include the following:

- Crisis management team which can include executive director, director of nursing/wellness director, owner, management team, the designated spokesperson and an alternate;
- NCAL state affiliate executive director and communications director;
- Your media contact list which contains the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of your local media contacts.

Spokesperson's Role During A Media Crisis

As the media crisis unfolds, the spokesperson's primary function is to assess the situation by gathering information about the problem or crisis that occurred in the assisted living community.

The spokesperson needs to:

- have access to senior management to understand management's position on the issue.
- provide accurate and transparent statements to the press.
- release information or clarifying points of fact; arrange for the release of a statement, or arrange interviews or tapings by the media.

If the spokesperson or the community fails to cooperate, the community can be assured that the reporter will attempt to interview other members of your staff, family members, or residents who may have knowledge of the situation or simply want to voice their opinions about what happened. This is the reason why a spokesperson should not use "no comment," as an answer. The "no comment" response causes reporters to find someone else to interview such

as employees, residents, former employees, or competitors. Remember, “no comment” also **always implies** wrong-doing.

Consider using Web sites, intranet sites or other mass notification systems such as group e-mail lists, text messages, or social media as a way to release your statement and updates about the situation.

Also have several media kits prepared in advance. The kit should be in a folder containing the history of your the assisted living community. When the crisis “hits,” there won’t be time for spokespeople to prepare media kits.

Part Five: Internet And Social Media

Most people continue to get their news and information from traditional media such as television, newspapers and radio. However, the Internet has changed how people receive news and the immediacy of news. The Internet has given birth to new types of media, commonly called Social or New Media.

Social Media can be defined as any interactive form of communication that uses the Internet including, blogs, podcasts, RSS feeds, social networks, such as Facebook, text messaging, etc.

New media makes it possible for anyone to create, modify, and share content and share it with others, using relatively simple tools that are often free or inexpensive. New media requires a computer or mobile device with Internet access.

Unlike traditional media, social media is direct link between your community and the audience member. It is dynamic and requires a more nuanced messaging because of the one-to-one interaction.

Social media tools can help you:

- **CONNECT** people with information and services. This includes connecting individuals with healthcare providers and people needing long term care.
- **COLLABORATE** with other people—including those within your organization or community.
- **CREATE** new content, services, communities, and channels of communication that help you deliver information and services.

Why Use Social Media As Part Of The Media Plan?

One of the primary differences lies with the fact that social media marketing is "inbound" as opposed to traditional media, which are "outbound." With social media, you aren't sending messages out and hoping that they'll find a way to your consumers. Rather, your messages are being delivered directly to consumers – but only if your organization has an appropriate and effective presence in social media.

Incorporating Social Media in Your Media Plan

When writing a media plan that includes social media, you need to focus on what steps you can take to connect with the people that you want to reach online and how you can engage them. Consider how you can engage them in conversations with your organization, and further, how you can encourage them to share information about your organization with other people they choose to network with.

This involves figuring out where your target customers are networking online and making certain that your organization has a presence in the social media outlets that they are participating in. Beyond just having a presence, it's essential to figure out how to reach out to the right people and encourage them to choose to follow your business. This involves utilizing your company's social media profiles to provide valuable information that will appeal to your target audience, and taking steps to build a following via social media.

The way you will need to approach accomplishing these goals will vary based on the nature of your business and who your target customers are. Once you set up a social media profile for your company, decide how you are going to approach building a following and tracking your success. You may want to start by sharing it with your own personal social networking contacts and encourage others who work with you to do the same, allowing your base of followers to grow through word of mouth and viral marketing. You may want to invest in pay per click advertising to reach out to consumers.

Social Media Requires Ongoing Participation

Regardless of how you plan to reach out via social networks, you also need a systematic plan in place for using social media to interact with the people who choose to allow you into their network. As with any form of marketing, you'll get out of it what you put into it. Simply having a presence in social media outlets is not sufficient. You need to actively participate in them.

This means that engaging in social media conversation needs to become a regular part of your to-do list and doing so is something that needs to be taken seriously. It's important to share information via social networks regularly, several times each week, in order to keep followers engaged and interested. If your approach to social networking seems random, haphazard, or insincere, the followers that you worked so hard to attract will likely not pay much attention to your company's social media presence and may even choose to leave your network.

Appendix A: Template of Employee Media Policy

Media and Public Contacts

To ensure that all **[insert community or company name]** information given to any media is accurate, up to date, and handled correctly, all requests for comment or background information must be referred to **[name of designated spokesperson]** for screening and/or response. This includes inquiries from any and all media regarding **[insert community or company name]** and the subjects in which the **[company/community]** has an interest. If any employee or independent contractor working at **[company/community]** is contacted by any media representative including reporters or producers, it is important to write down as much identifying information as possible (i.e., the name of the caller, the media they represent, the time they called, the purpose of the call, etc.), and pass it along to the **[insert primary/secondary spokesperson name]**. However, do not push, probe, or ask about the caller's specific interests. Additionally, do not attempt to respond with information. Employees must also advise the **[insert primary/secondary spokesperson name]** if they serve, or are asked to serve, on any editorial board which may publish material related to **[insert community or company name]** interests or which may use information for publication which is gained through their employment. Inquiries regarding current or former employees must be directed to the Human Resources department for handling.

Representing [insert community or company name]

Your email address identifies you as an employee of **[insert community or company name]**. However, only the authorized personnel are allowed to speak on behalf of the **[insert community or company name]** (as described above). Therefore, you are not authorized to represent **[insert community or company name]** in public communications on the Internet. When accessing various online public resources, you must refrain from representing yourself as an **[insert community or company name]** employee or in any way indicating that you work for or are associated with the **[insert community or company name]**. Representing yourself as speaking on behalf of **[insert community or company name]** without authorization may subject you to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

[insert community or company name] prohibits employees from posting messages on the Internet related to our **[company/community]**, members, competitors, or industry. Employees are also prohibited from posting messages providing non-public information that they have learned in the course of their work. If you are communicating over the Internet with respect to public matters, the recipient of the message must be made aware that you are not speaking on behalf of **[insert community or company name]**. Every such posting or e-mail must include a statement to the effect that: "Opinions expressed in this message are my own and do not represent the opinions or policies of **[insert community or company name]** or any of its other employees, directors, officers, shareholders, or affiliates."

The contents of this template are for informational purposes only, and do not constitute legal advice.

Appendix B: Key Media Contacts List

Key People to Know – Television and Radio

Public Service/Community Relations Director – Contact for Public Service Announcements, free messages, editorial rebuttals, public affairs talk shows or community calendar listings.

Promotion Director – The Promotion Director’s job is to promote the station through marketing and community relations

News Director/Assignment Editor – Determine what news goes on the air, new releases.

Editorial Director – Contact to offer editorial comment or to respond to a station editorial.

Community Bulletin Board Director – Contact for announcing meetings or special events.

Program Director – At a large radio or TV station, this person is in charge of all programming except news.

Sales Manager – This person is responsible for selling airtime and may be called the Marketing Manager.

Key People To Know – Newspaper

City Editor/Assignment Editor – Like the News Director at a broadcast station the City Editor at the newspaper determines what news to include in the paper.

Feature Editor – If the newspaper is large enough to have different sections, many of them may be under the overall direction of the Features Editor, with specific editors for different topics.

Business Editors– Most newspapers have separate sections for business which may present new opportunities to focus on health in general or profile your community, the administrator or owner.

Other Key People At Newspapers

Reporters/Columnists covering aging, seniors’ health, baby boomers or other related topics.

Editors of community calendars.

Editor of the op-ed (opposing editorial page)

Appendix C: Media Advisory

Media Advisory***Media Advisory***Media Advisory

Expert To Discuss Latest Osteoporosis Treatment

Media Advisory

Contact: (INSERT NAME)

(INSERT DATE)

(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)

WHAT:

(INSERT FACILITY NAME) will host a 60-minute presentation on the current preventative treatments for osteoporosis in seniors (INSERT DAY, DATE), for the citizens of (INSERT TOWN).

WHO:

(INSERT HOST NAME) will host the lecture. (INSERT NAME), (INSERT TITLE), of (INSERT COMPANY) will be the guest speaker on the causes, symptoms to watch for, and treatments for osteoporosis.

WHEN:

(INSERT DAY, MONTH, YEAR) at (INSERT TIME)

WHERE:

(INSERT NAME OF FACILITY)

(INSERT ADDRESS)

(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)

Assisted Living Community Adds Dementia Wing

For Immediate Release: [Insert Date]

[Insert name of community Contact: [INSERT NAME, PHONE, E-MAIL ADDRESS]

[Insert Town, State abbreviation]— [name of community] opened a new wing today dedicated to serving residents with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.

"We're so pleased to officially open these dementia care apartments and help our new residents move-in," says [Owner/Director.] "These apartments are meeting an immediate need in our surrounding to community for Alzheimer's and dementia care."

The new wing consists of 15 one-bedroom and studio units. The units are built in a circle surrounding an outdoor, self-contained courtyard. The hallway connecting the units is circle which allows resident's to wander the halls without being disrupted by a wall, corner, or a door. The wing includes halls with large glass windows, which allows the residents to see the outdoor courtyard.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, 5.3 million Americans have the disorder and this segment of the population is expected to increase to 16 million by 2050. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 10 percent of people older than 65 and nearly half of those older than 85 have Alzheimer's or some form of dementia.

[Insert ---30— or ### at end of text to signify press release if complete.]

[Insert Description of the Community, Website, general phone number, fax number, and street address.

Appendix E: New Hire Press Template

[Headline: Nationally Recognized Chef Hired At Local Assisted Living Community]

[Subhead: Smith Earned James Beard Award In 2004]

For Immediate Release: [Insert Date]

Contact:[insert name of community spokesperson, phone, e-mail]

[Insert Town, State Abbreviation]—[insert name of community] is proud to announce that [individual's first and last name] has been hired to be the new [insert title and department].

Prior to joining [insert community name], [his or her last name] was [previous job title, name of company] since [insert month, year start of previous job]. [Insert another sentence about job history]

[Insert a sentence about the individual's education degrees, such as: Smith earned a bachelor's of science in food service management systems from University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1998. He graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York in 2001.]

[Add sentence listing certifications and professional recognitions: Smith has earned the James Beard award.]

As [insert new title], [insert individual's last name] is responsible for overseeing [describe job responsibilities: the culinary experiences for residents and a staff of seven].

[Insert biographical information if employee is comfortable: Smith lives with his wife and two children in New Bern, Mass.]

[Insert Community's tag line and website.]

Appendix F: Promotion Press Template

[Headline] [Local Resident] Promoted To [insert job title: Department Chief]

For Immediate Release: [Insert Date]

Contact:[insert name of community spokesperson, phone, e-mail]

[Insert Town, State Abbreviation]—[insert name of community] is proud to announce that **[individual's first and last name: Jane Rowley]** has been promoted to **[insert title and department: Director of Resident Care]**.

Prior to this promotion, **[she]** was **[previous job title, name of company, length of job service in that position: the staff licensed practical nurse at Sunshine Retirement Community, Naples, Fla., for the past eight years.]**

[Insert additional job history: Rowley has worked in assisted living since 2001.]

[Add certifications or education degrees, then professional recognitions earned. Rowley graduated from St. Mary's College of nursing with honors.]

As **[insert new title], [insert individual's last name]** is responsible for **[Describe responsibilities]**.

Insert Community's tag line and website.

Appendix G: Notable Person Template
Use Community's Stationary

**[Headline: TV Anchor Interviews Residents For
WWII Oral Histories]**

[Subhead: Greatest Generation Residents Recall War Time Contributions]

For Immediate Release: [Insert Date]

Contact:[insert name of community spokesperson, phone, e-mail]

[Insert Town, State Abbreviation]— [individual's first and last name and what person is known for actor, television] Martin O'Brien, evening news anchor of WKRP will visit **[insert name of community]** on **[insert day, date and time]**.

[Insert a sentence about what the reason is for the notable person's visit.] Martin is the host of Cincinnati's Greater Good Campaign acknowledging WWII veterans and spouses' contributions to the war effort. Martin will be interviewing the residents on camera for an upcoming weeklong series broadcasting their stories. The video will then be donated to the City Museum for its exhibit on WWII.

[Insert a quote from a resident about what he or she got out of the experience.]

"I remember saving all the tin cans and the rations we got from the grocer," said Jane Smith. "I felt as if I was helping the boys overseas. Retelling these stories makes me feel young again"

[Insert quote from administrator about the benefit to residents] "Interviewing these residents and preserving their personal stories makes the residents feel a part of the community and gratification in knowing their personal legacies will educate future generations through the permanent exhibit," said Robin Dole, administrator.

[Insert sentence stating: Photos are available upon request (if photos are available. Shoot photos showing action, not people grouped together).]

[Insert Community's tag line and website]

Appendix H: Alzheimer's Month Template

Headline: Assisted Living Residence Recognizes Alzheimer's Awareness Month

For Immediate Release: **[Insert Date]**

Contact: **[insert name of community spokesperson, phone, e-mail]**

[Insert Town, State Abbreviation]— November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and National Family Caregivers Month in honor of the 5.2 million Americans—nearly half of the people aged 85 years and older have the disease. More than one third of resident in assisted living communities responding to a survey have some form of dementia

In recognition of these facts, **[community name]** along with the **[Alzheimer's Association town, state chapter]**—announce a series of free weekly public lectures on the various aspects of Alzheimer's disease.

[Community name] invites the general public or those family caregivers currently taking care of someone with Alzheimer's disease to learn the latest developments about detecting and finding a cure for the disease.

Alzheimer's Lecture Series:

*Nov. 2, 7:30 P.M. to 8:30 p.m. **Alzheimer's Association of Tulsa, Okla.** - Chapter President Jim Smith will discuss the latest developments in detection of the disease and treatments. Smith will discuss the 10 Signs and how families can get loved ones involved in clinical research.*

*Nov. 15, 7 p.m. **National Commemorative Candle Lighting** is an annual event to remember and honor those affected by Alzheimer's and related illnesses.*

*Nov. 16, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. **Maintain Your Brain: How to live a brain healthy lifestyle** - If you are a Baby Boomer or Active Senior concerned about brain health, this workshop is for you! Also Heartland Homes activity director will explain the brain games residents play to help them stay active and healthy.*

*Nov. 30: **Step By Step: The Journey with Alzheimer's** - The Key: By taking steps to plan ahead and prepare for the changes Alzheimer's brings, families can chart a journey that eases the rough spots and fosters pleasant memories along the way. You are not alone...we are here to help. Heartland Homes Director will explain the progression and treatment options as well as explain respite care.*

Monthly Support Group: Heartland Homes provides ongoing support to family members impacted by dementia. 3rd Tuesday – Alzheimer's Support Group at 11:00 a.m. The Heartland Homes Alzheimer's Support Group is facilitated by Alzheimer Association Tulsa Okla. Chapter. It is sponsored and facilitated by Heartland Homes and The Caregivers Support Network. General public is welcome.

[Insert information/tag line about community, insert website]

Dressing for On-Camera Appearances

Suggestions for Men:

<p>Suits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid suits with stripes, checks, or small patterns.• Medium-tone grey or blues are most appropriate.• Make sure you feel comfortable. If you feel uncomfortable, you'll look uncomfortable.	<p>Shirts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid pure white shirts.• Off white, light blue or grey shirts work best <p>Eyeglasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid heavy dark frames.• Don't wear dark or tinted glasses for any interview.
<p>Jewelry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid large flashy tie-clasps, cuff links, expensive watches, bracelets and chains.• Empty pockets of loose change and keys.	<p>Neckties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bright colors like red are preferable• Avoid checks or small patterns.• Attach the microphone to your label not your tie.

Suggestions for Women:

<p>Clothing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose blues, tan peach and shades of grey colored clothing.• Don't wear white or light colored dresses, blouses or blouses.• Choose solid colors. Avoid small patterns and stripes.	<p>Jewelry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid large and extremely bright pieces.• Avoid large dangling earrings.
<p>Makeup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use your every day makeup, with a slight more lipstick and blush.• Use powdered blushes and shadows rather than creams• Avoid frosted colors.	<p>Eyeglasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid heavy dark frames.• Don't wear dark or tinted glasses for any interview.

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