SESSION 5

Media Rules of Engagement

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

An interview is not a conversation

- Come with your own agenda.
- Be prepared to get your messages in there.
- Do not wait to be asked.
- Use the opportunity to promote your work.
- Use your answers to steer the conversation where you want it to go.

It's not the question, it's the answer

- The readers/viewers/listeners almost never hear or see the question.
- You have control by what you say or don't say.
- It's not the reporter, it is the audience.
- You want to reach the readers, listeners and viewers.

You can say "I don't know"

- Be factual and do not guess or speculate. You can always refer them to your website or follow up later.

Never say "no comment"

- There is always something you can say.







If you don't want to be quoted, say something really boring

- "Off the record" is information given to a reporter in confidence without the intention of publication.
- Keep in mind that different reporters might have different understanding of this.
- You might as well always be "on the record."

"On background" means the reporter can publish the information you provide but not attribute it to you or your organization

- Although you can provide reporters with information "on background," they likely won't publish it if they can't cite or reveal their source.

Know your rights

- You have the right to know who is interviewing you and why they are covering the story.
- You have the right to ask questions.
- You have the right to take time to prepare.
- You have the right to start over.
- You have the right to ask and review quotes before going to print.
- You do NOT have the right to review a story before it is published.
- You do NOT have the right to retract anything you have said (even if you start over).