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	02	14/02/08	DRE	How-to Guide 4	Colette Langford

Guide Four

Working with the media

Introduction

Community Development Workers (CDWs) are central to implementing and delivering the Department of Health's 'Delivering Race Equality' (DRE) in mental health programme.

Evidence shows that individuals from some black and minority ethnic (BME) communities fear isolation and discrimination from both mainstream society as well as their own culture if they are to seek help for any form of mental illness.

Our aim is to help you break down barriers and build relationships. And fortunately one of the best tools to help you do so is available in each and every city, town and village of the UK. The media.



What is this guide for?

This 'How to' guide is the fourth in the series of publications which aims to support your work by providing the necessary tools and offering practical advice to help you connect with the black and ethnic minority (BME) audiences in your community.

Guide Four centres around working with the media. There are a wide range of communication channels available to you – radio, newspapers, magazines, television and the internet. Your local communities will access these outlets on a daily basis and so they make a powerful tool for sharing widespread messages.

Within this guide you will find an overview of media options, step by step guides on how to approach the media, what works and what does not, tips on press releases and photography and examples of media campaigns from other CDWs.

Please remember to involve any communications or media colleagues in your plans and to consult them before contacting journalists.

For further communications ideas, look out for the other guides in this series:

- What's working where – examples of effective communications
- How to create a communications strategy
- How to develop relationships with stakeholders

For copies, log on to www.drenetwork.org/downloads

Why the media is so important

Across the UK, the media is primarily an information source, reporting on national, international and regional news. The media relevant to your campaign will be specifically interested in any events in your community which affect local people.

The media is a highly influential form of communication. It can change opinion by portraying news in a positive or negative light. It will be important to develop relationships with individual journalists so they are aware of the many aspects of your work and can report on mental health stories in a positive and encouraging way.

How the media works

As you start to think about sharing your details with the media, it is worth considering where the media usually find their stories, and what journalists typically look out for – what makes a good story. It will help you identify which aspects of your work will be of most interest to them.

The priority for journalists is the drive to find a good story. For example, a powerful headline would be 'Bananas possible cure for cancer' not 'Bananas are nice with whipped cream'; or 'New campaign increases awareness of mental health in business by 20%' not 'Organisation submits annual report and template on patterns of mental health'.

Sources of stories

Journalists have a full newspaper to complete every day (or week), while radio presenters need to fill air space 24/7. So where do they find all their stories? Sources include:

Personal contacts in the community

From religious leaders to MPs, head teachers, entrepreneurs, health organisations and charities, these contacts often feed stories or provide comment. You could invite them to take part in a photocall if you are launching a new service – a way of them publicly endorsing your work.

Political agenda

The big stories hitting the national media – especially in politics – can fuel local stories. You could offer a local journalist comment on how national decisions will affect your local community, especially relating to mental health issues.

Press releases/press conferences

Where organisations develop and offer stories, either through written form (press release) or through a physical gathering where an announcement is made to several members of the press (press conference). You can issue press releases on a regular basis to keep the media informed about your work. Find more detail on page 8 of this guide.

Events

From charity functions to street carnivals, any local events could be featured by the local media if they make an impact in some way. You could let the media know of any events you are planning, such as a charity ball to raise funds for local mental health support.

Launches

Anything new may be of interest. You could issue a press release detailing new leaflets highlighting your services or a new partnership.

Research and surveys

From Local Government reports to regional surveys, statistics and findings can be of interest, particularly if there is a regional perspective. You could commission research into attitudes towards mental health and issue results to the media as a way of flagging up your services.

Timely hooks

Calendar events can be useful, such as awareness days and weeks (e.g. World Mental Health Day, as with the Touchstone Leeds case study on page 9, or Black History Month) and local festivals. You can time your press release to tap into these occasions and increase relevance.



Five steps to develop a media strategy

Before you begin contacting journalists it is important to have a media strategy – a plan – in place. Follow these five steps:

Step 1 What is your aim? Create your objectives – what do you hope to achieve? What change do you want to see? Are you trying to increase awareness of an issue or project? Are you targeting a specific audience with a particular message? Do you want people to change their behaviour?

Step 2 What do you want to say? Keep the campaign focussed with three or four key messages which become the essential statements you will return to time and time again. Think about the change you want and how you are most likely to achieve it.

Keep your messages simple. Speak in the right language – both actual language, e.g. Punjabi, Polish or Urdu, and in the right tone. Your style of language will change dependent on whether you are communicating with teenagers or older people.

Step 3 Who do you want to say it to? Consider your audience. Are you trying to reach specific, niche communities, or wider geographical districts? To help plan the most suitable campaign, think about where they go, what they read, watch and listen to. What might their favourite website be? How do they travel around?

This will help identify the most appropriate media channels to work with. You have a wide choice:

- newspaper (daily and weekly)
- regional magazines
- local television
- radio
- internet
- community newsletters, magazines, student publications etc

When detailing your audience, be as specific as possible. Consider both your audience (those people who you want to reach, to encourage them to change behaviour) and their influencers (those who will help you communicate with your main audience).

For example, your audience might be black men of Caribbean origin, aged 16-30, who you could target via radio (see the case study of Birmingham-based CDW David George's work on page 6), youth internet sites or magazines, or Muslim women aged 45 and over who would be better communicated with through daily and weekly newspapers, community magazines or regional TV news.

Step 4 How are you going to say it? What activities will help you reach your primary audience? Perhaps an event, press release, one-off feature, photocall, radio interview or creative stunt of some kind. For examples, see pages 5-11 of this guide.

Step 5 Evaluate As you complete an activity it is vital to evaluate. What were the key outputs and outcomes? Was it successful? Did you secure coverage? Did it cover key messages? Did it make a difference? What could be done better?

By asking these questions throughout the campaign rather than just at the end, you will give yourself the opportunity to amend anything which could be improved and make the campaign more successful.

Radio interviews

If you set up a radio interview as part of your media campaign you may find the following points helpful.

Preparation:

- Select an interviewee who is confident and knows your campaign well (perhaps yourself?)
- Brief them on campaign messages and encourage them to mention at least one or two (see page 4 of this guide)
- Consider any anecdotes to back up these messages – to paint the picture
- Confirm time, date and venue for the interview
- Is it 'down the line' (over the telephone), 'studio' (interviewee will have to go along to the actual radio studio) or 'ISDN' (a high quality phone line)?
- Is the interview live or a pre-record (recorded hours or even days before it is broadcast)?
- Is anyone else being interviewed? It is helpful to know if they are interviewing someone with an opposing view, so you can prepare for a debate

The interview itself:

- Use the 'bridge' technique – a way of bypassing a difficult question and getting to what you really want to say. For example:
 - Well look, the real issue here is....
 - That's an interesting point but it's not the main issue here. What's important is...
- Get your branding in, particularly if your main aim is to promote an organisation or service. Be subtle, for example, "Well, at Liverpool Mental Health Network, we have found ..."
- Avoid jargon – use everyday language so everyone listening can understand



Case study: Birmingham Radio Project Update

Aim of activity

To raise the profile of mental health issues in Birmingham's African Caribbean community. You may recall the pilot activity as outlined in the first 'How to' guide. For a copy, log on to www.drenetwork.org/downloads

Main audience

African Caribbean men and women

Method used

A partnership with Birmingham-based New Style Radio which broadcast a range of interviews in June 2007. These featured CDWs, a consultant psychiatrist, representatives from a local community group and service users.

It proved so popular that David George, Birmingham CDW, has successfully extended the partnership by securing a half-hour radio show slot on Friday mornings which he will present throughout 2008.

Local reactions

The organisations with which David has partnered are really noticing the benefits. Local charity BITA Pathways, which offers work-based therapy and training for adults experiencing mental ill-health, has seen a marked increase in enquiries since its Chief Executive, Erica Barnett, was interviewed on New Style Radio.

Benefits of local radio campaign

"Using radio is a great way of reaching people who might have a mental health problem but don't know it," says David. "So many black people in Birmingham are only realising they have a mental health problem when they reach a crisis point and are sectioned.

"We use the radio programmes to talk about how to spot if someone has a mental health problem. It's about self-awareness and knowing who you are as a person. If someone hears something on a radio programme it can really give them a wake-up call".

If you want to do something similar

- Encourage ideas from your team. As David says, "If somebody has a new innovative way of communicating mental health issues then I'm interested in talking to them"
- Gather a range of spokespeople – with as much variety as possible
- Approach the planning department or newsroom of your local radio station to discuss how a partnership could work



Creating a press release

A press release is a key tool to get your message to the media. It needs careful crafting as it influences the media's perception of an organisation and can 'make or break' a story.

An effective press release needs to be:

- Short – no more than 2 pages
- Newsworthy – an announcement or development
- Relevant – of interest to the publication/ programme and their audience
- Easy to understand – jargon free and simple (did you know that BBC language is pitched at educated 13/14 year olds?)

And don't forget to include:

- Contact info – how to reach you for more detail (landline, mobile and email)
- Your point of view – a short quote from you and third party if possible
- Date – for context and timeliness
- Notes to editors – additional information (e.g. background to your organisation) can be included at the bottom of the page

The first paragraph is particularly important as it grabs an editor's attention. They receive hundreds of releases every day so yours needs to stand out. A strong first paragraph should detail **Who, What, Where, When, Why**.

The following paragraphs build on detail, and decrease in importance down the page.

How to issue your press release

To who?

- Check media contacts are right through a simple call to reception
- Research to ensure they would have an interest in your story

How?

- Email or call directly (ask for the news desk)

When? Options are:

- Issue to all media at once – a good chance of getting coverage somewhere
- Exclusive – to get more space but in just one publication
- Embargo – with specific date and time so that journalists have time to put together a story before a competitor can cover it first

Follow up

- Offer more info / interviews
- Allow plenty of time for them to write the story
- Don't call daily newspaper journalists after 3pm if you can help it – they will be on deadline

Photography

It is a good idea to send out a photograph to accompany your local story. This could be of individuals entering a partnership, a patient you are featuring as a case study, yourself as CDW with a religious leader meeting a local MP to discuss mental health issues, members of the community releasing balloons to mark the launch of a new campaign, the unveiling of artwork from a competition highlighting the truth about mental health.



Tips for good press photographs

- Branding – be subtle, not over the top
- Not too many people
- Not too dark/too light an image
- Don't forget to caption your photograph (from left to right) detailing exactly who is in the picture, where they are from, and a sentence summarising the story behind the picture
- Include contact details so the publication can get in touch for more information
- Distribute digital images by email, in high quality jpeg file to the picture desk

How to choose a good local photographer

Always use a professional. The ideal choice would be a photographer from your local paper – call the picture desk and ask for their recommendation of a freelance press/PR photographer. Not only will they know exactly what the local paper wants in terms of style, you will also have more chance of getting them to publish it as well!

Arranging a photocall

At certain times it is worth setting up a photocall where you invite local photographers and television crews to come to an event to take their own images – and interview individuals at the same time. This works well if, for example, a local celebrity is backing your campaign and you set up a photo opportunity to mark that.

To do so you issue a 'photocall announcement' via email to picture desks, which should include:

Event:

Date:

Time:

Venue:

And a summary of the story behind the picture:

Phone the day before to ensure it is in picture desk diaries, and book your own photographer as well so you can send on images to any papers unable to attend.

Media activities – examples of what works

Here is a selection of media activities for you to consider:

Events

- Invite media to an event, for example:
 - if you are delivering a speech at a community meeting
 - if you are running a town centre stall, distributing giveaways – ask the local paper's photographer along
- Create an awards ceremony to find who has achieved the most as a practitioner within the mental health arena. Host a ceremony in the style of 'Pride of Britain'. Clients/patients to nominate, a panel of judges to announce winner via the media etc.

Media partnership

- Set up a partnership with the media itself, such as a 'mental health awareness month' with the local paper. Create one feature a week highlighting the range of services in the local area, case studies, interviews with leading members of the community, updates on the national picture – and how that impacts care locally etc
- Set up an expert advice phone-in on local radio, or as a regular column in a community magazine

Even with limited resources your media work can have a strong impact on a local, or even national, level – as Touchstone Leeds found out.

Case study:

World Mental Health Day – 15 minute video for the BBC Big Screen

Aim of activity

To capitalise on World Mental Health Day and demonstrate both the diversity of Touchstone in Leeds and the diversity of Leeds the city.

Audience

General public in Leeds to raise awareness of World Mental Health Day, then a wider audience via BBC website.

Method used

Maximised the opportunity to feature for 15 minutes on the BBC Big Screen to mark World Mental Health Day 2007 – to be broadcast in a prime city centre location twice a day for one week and then posted permanently on the BBC website.

The film was created with images reflecting 'diversity', meaningful captions alongside images of Leeds and 'talking heads' giving positive messages about 'mental wellbeing' – a simple mechanic to create and edit.

Local reactions

"We are now supporting various partners to make some films documenting their own experiences (racist bullying of people with a learning disability, reminiscence work with older BME people) for use in GP surgeries" says Jon Beech from Touchstone Leeds.

Benefits of video

- Making the actual people involved in mental health – both clients and practitioners – the real stars of the show
- Creating a film is not difficult – even with no prior film-making knowledge. It is a very arresting format to use and the technology is so cheap that professional effects are not hard to achieve for minimal budget

If you would like to do something similar

- Source images from websites such as www.flickr.com and recycle any existing images you may have
- Encourage partner organisations to assist and contribute, perhaps by linking to an existing partnership activity
- Create a consent form and information leaflet for all those participating in the film

To view Touchstone Leeds' film, log on to www.veoh.com/videoDetails.html?v=v1213050cdbpMCz7

You can also read more about Touchstone Leeds and its pilot project detailed in the first 'How to' guide. For copies, log on to www.drenetwork.org/downloads



And finally, top tips for success ...



Know your media

- Read the papers often to recognise regular slots and identify which journalists cover health or social issues
- Listen to radio and TV presenters as much as possible – especially at drive time, news bulletins and key ‘busy slots’ of the day

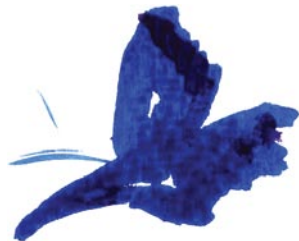
Understand the rules

- If you promise one paper an ‘exclusive’ be sure not to discuss the same story with competitors
- Remember journalists’ deadlines – if you are not sure when the paper goes to print, ask...and avoid calling at such busy times



Make contacts

- Introduce yourself by offering to call in – a chance to brief them on your work, and begin a more familiar working relationship
- Stay in touch with them (though don’t pester!) e.g. by tipping them off about future work
- Be helpful. Go out of your way to deliver all the information the journalist needs
- Be reliable. Ensure you deliver all the information you promised, set up any interviews you discussed
- Warm relationships are crucial as you will become trusted and it’s more likely they will use your stories in future



Have you found this guide useful?

We welcome feedback on this guide. We hope you now feel inspired to set up local communications activities and media campaigns. We would be delighted to hear about any activities you run in BME communities, and any lessons learned in the process that other CDWs might find helpful. Also if you have any photography which you think others might be able to make use of we would be delighted to include it in our DRE photo library so please email images in.

Please email any ideas, experiences and photography to dre@forster.co.uk

Useful contacts:

- Department of Health
www.dh.gov.uk
- NHS Choices
www.nhs.uk