

How do I raise awareness of ICP2014 with the local media?

Thank you for getting involved in this important part of the RCSLT's International Communication Project 2014 activities. Media coverage can be a simple yet effective way to share ICP 2014 with an even bigger audience.

With a few simple elements, you can put together a story that will interest your local newspaper or radio station.

Securing media coverage - A step-by-step guide

STEP 1 - Know your media outlet

Read/listen/watch your local newspaper/radio /news programme to get an idea of the kind of stories they like to run.

STEP 2 - Putting together the story - things you will need.

- A press release. Use one of the template press releases provided or create your own.
- A newsworthy story. Is it new, topical and relevant? Remember, local media is interested in local issues affecting local people.
- A local spokesperson - you! You are the local expert on communication and communication disorders. You see the disadvantage your clients face and you know the life-changing difference that access to speech and language therapy makes.
- Your key messages. These are short sound bites that sum up what ICP2014 wants to communicate. Using them will also ensure our messaging is consistent with other countries taking part in ICP2014.

Key Messages:

- **Communication is vital to life**
Communication disorders limit a person's ability to participate fully in family life, their community, education and professionally.
 - **Communication professionals make a critical difference**
Without access to key services, people with communication disorders are at a lifelong disadvantage.
 - **Early intervention is key**
Research shows that early identification and intervention programs create positive results over a lifetime for people with communication difficulties and society as a whole.
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- **A case study** - This is a client's experience. There is no better way to demonstrate the value of speech and language therapy than by sharing the stories of people who have benefitted from it. Talk to your client and their families to see if they are willing to take part in your ICP2014 activities. Clients' families are just as important and their stories are just as powerful. Make sure you have all the right consent (refer to the Step-by-Step Guide to Consent). Check how they are comfortable being involved; speaking with journalists, having their photo taken, speaking on radio or being filmed for television.
 - **Facts and figures** - use the 'key facts' located in the toolkit, localise them or use local statistics. Having the numbers to back up why you're campaigning makes your story powerful.
 - **Permission from your employer.** Check with your employer to make sure they approve of you approaching your client/s. Check with your manager and/or Public Affairs/Communications Department (if applicable) to make sure that they approve of you and your client/s taking part in ICP2014 activities. Make sure you follow your workplace's internal procedures, too.

STEP 3 - Pitching the story

Identify the correct media contact at the outlet you are targeting or contact Robin at the RCSLT on 020 7378 3013 / press@rcslt.org for assistance.

Email your media release to the journalist. You can follow up over the phone to talk about your story, explaining what you are doing, why and the number of people in your local community living with a communication disorder. The journalists may want to include a photograph so make sure your client is comfortable with this. A photo opportunity may take place at your workplace or the journalist may prefer photos of your client in your community.

STEP 4 - The interview

Talk to your client to make sure they are comfortable speaking to the journalist, as well as practicing some responses (if needed). You will have an idea of what the journalist will want to speak about from your earlier conversation, so think about what you want to say and make sure you're familiar with the ICP2014's key messages. You can always refer back to them if you get stuck.

If they ask anything you can't answer just say you will get back to them after the interview.

When the interview is finished, check with the journalist when it will be published or broadcast and let the RCSLT know.

We're here to help - if you need any help or advice putting together and/or pitching a story to your local media, contact Robin Matheou on 020 7378 3013, or email press@rcslt.org.