**Interview Tips**

I. PREPARING FOR YOUR TV INTERVIEW

A. Creating the Message:
   1. Think about the main, overarching idea you want the reporter and audience to get from your interview, that can be expressed in a couple of sentences.
   2. Having a message helps you focus the interview. It is not necessarily a "sound bite" — it’s an idea you are trying to get across. It is reinforced by sound bites, phrases, and statistics.
   3. Know your audience: Often, it will be the lay public, which means you will need to use language everyone understands.

B. Develop the Points:
   1. What does the lay public need to know?
      a) Why should they care? Will this make a difference in people’s lives?
      b) Add one or two “power facts,” i.e. a simple, powerful statistic.
   2. Are there important misconceptions that need to be dispelled?
   3. What’s the ultimate goal of your work?
   4. Anticipate tough questions and rehearse your answers.
   5. Jot down your message points and practice saying them out loud.

C. Delivering your Message:
   1. Say it simply and avoid jargon.
   2. Make your point, and then stop, resisting the urge to fill in awkward pauses.

D. Staying on message:
   1. Reporters often frame their questions to bring out the conflict of a story. Beware of loaded questions that bait you.
      a) Don’t accept false facts. Example: "Isn't it true that...,”
         (1) Avoid repeating the negative words in the reporter’s question.
         (2) Answer in positive terms, i.e. "Actually, what we’ve learned is..."
   2. Redirect a conversation if it starts to veer off track.
      a) Address the question briefly but quickly bridge to what you want to say, i.e. “That’s a subject of much debate, but what’s really important is ...”
   3. If you don’t know the answer to a question, say so, and then to tell about what you do know.
II. **BROADCAST INTERVIEW TIPS**

A. **Broadcast Style:**
   1. Speak in simple, clear language and in a conversational tone.
   2. Talk as if you're speaking to someone unfamiliar with the topic.
   3. Broadcast reporters use colorful, concise answers. Try to simplify your explanation using analogies about things average people can relate to.
   4. Broadcast reporters are usually not looking for all the facts and figures during the on-camera interview. They are usually looking for a subjective statement about why the subject matters, that they wouldn't be able to say themselves.

B. **On-camera Tips:**
   1. **Voice and appearance become part of the message**
      a) Look neat. (You don’t want people to be so distracted by your messy hair or your clothes that they’re not paying attention to what you’re saying.)
   2. **Look relaxed and engaged**
      a) Sit back in your chair, but don't slouch.
      b) Avoid swivel chairs, because inadvertent swiveling will be distracting.
      c) Rest your arms on your lap, instead of on the arms of the chair, which could cause your shoulders to rise and make you look less relaxed.
      d) Sit on your coat jacket, if necessary, to keep it from creeping up.
      e) Small hand gestures are fine, if they help you emphasize a point.
      f) If you’re standing, place your feet with one slightly in front of the other, to help prevent your body from rocking from side to side.
      g) **Eye contact: Look at the interviewer all the times (unless you’re asked to look into the camera).** Looking off into the air may make you look less convinced and/or convincing on camera.
      h) Whenever appropriate, smile. It's always more pleasing and confident.
      i) Avoid making faces (if the question is confusing or if you disagree with it.)
   3. **Sound Authoritative:**
      a) Deliver your answers with apparent confidence and positive energy.
      b) If you notice you're not speaking clearly and concisely, you'll see it on the reporter's face. Try to adjust, without getting bogged down in an answer.
   4. **Attire:**
      a) Solid suits or tailored clothes work best.
      b) Medium-range colors: For suits - grays, navy blue, medium-browns, without stripes look best, with pastel shirts and a simple-patterned tie.
      c) Avoid black, white, and red as the main color of your outfit
      d) Avoid large patterns and elaborate designs
      e) Avoid flashy or jangly jewelry which can reflect light and make noise.
      f) Soft, natural-toned makeup works best
      g) Avoid short skirts, short socks, things stored in your breast pocket.