

Message delivery: The interview

It's one thing to develop a strategic message. It's an entirely different skill to deliver your message in a strategic way. Whether you're giving your 30-second "elevator speech" or presenting before a city council or school board, you will want to provide your three components of a message: What's wrong? Why does it matter? What is the solution?

Keep in mind the following messaging tips: Be clear on your goals; stay on message; speak to shared values; resist the urge to say everything; prepare for hard questions; provide compelling examples; use clear language and remember to follow-up. Use this worksheet to help you practice delivering your message. Some hard questions are provided for the "interviewer," or you can come up with your own.

Instructions

Find a partner to help you practice your interview skills. Allow five minutes for each interview, and take turns playing the role of the reporter and the interviewee.

Reporter

You can ask any question you like, including the samples below. Overall, you are most interested in the role individuals can play in solving this problem. You will try to steer the interview toward individual responsibility.

Interviewee

Your goals are to answer the question so that you include environmental factors that contribute to the problem and to clearly articulate your policy solution. Use the message you developed earlier as your starting point. For the purpose of this exercise *only*, you can make up facts and stories. Take note of what you needed to make your case so you can prepare those materials for future interviews.



Possible interview questions:

(Remember, you can ask any questions you like.)

Why is this an important issue?

Why should this matter to someone who is not affected by the problem?

What can be done to solve this problem?

Who does the problem affect? Why does it matter?

Shouldn't people just take more responsibility for their own health?

Why should we get the government or business involved?

We have a very tight state budget right now and we can't have everything we want. Why is this solution more important than other health or social programs?

What will happen if nothing is done?

Who opposes this change? What will they say? Why should they care?