

Tips for Gaining Media Attention

April is Counseling Awareness Month (CAM) — a time for professional counselors to educate the public about the profession, the work they are doing, and the contributions they make to communities around the world.

This is an opportunity to leverage the monthly celebration and gain media attention for you and the profession. Try to do something that helps get your professional counseling story out to the public in your area. Consider a newspaper interview, an article in a local magazine, an appearance on a local television show, an interview on a radio program or a presentation to a local group.

The basic rule of thumb in obtaining coverage is to do something newsworthy. CAM promoters will need to plan well in advance to get the appropriate attention and prepare topics and stories to share with the media. The American Counseling Association (ACA) suggests beginning your efforts in March.

Consider one or more of the following as your newsworthy suggestion for approaching a member of the media:

- Professional counselor added to the staff
- Professional counseling program introduces new service or dimension
- Public interest stories – ex: Professional counseling staff collects coats for homeless shelter
- Professional counselor achieves certification or licensure credential
- Professional counselor elected to local, state or national organization office or appointed to committee
- Profile of school, agency or organization – ex: Day in the Life of a Professional Counselor
- Professional counselor wins award or earns advanced degree
- Professional counseling credential story – Explanation of licensure, certification, etc. to a public that can benefit from knowing
- Some newspapers are open to the suggestion of editorial subjects and contributions for their opinion editorial pages (op-ed section). How a community addresses the education or mental health issues of its citizens can make for excellent editorial subjects.

You can find appropriate contact information for media outlets on their websites. Emailing or calling is fine as long as you have your “pitch” ready, which includes the story idea and important facts and statistics.

Important questions to ask yourself before engaging with the media:

- Is the story unique?
- Is there a local angle?
- Is the story timely?
- Is the story visual?

Here are examples of how ACA representatives and members have become part of a media story:

- [Prioritizing the Mental Health Needs of Seniors](#)
- [Counseling May Combat Ebola Fears](#)
- [Men and Counseling](#)
- [Dating with a Mental Illness](#)

Please save any stories that get secured, and share them with ACA by contacting:

Catherine Sharretts

csharretts@livewiredc.com

703-519-1600 x104