

A counselor can help with ...

*Recovering from trauma • Recovering from addiction • Making school choices • Making career choices
Getting a marriage on the right track • Getting a relationship on the right track
Getting a family on the right track • Dealing with chronic pain • Recovering from eating issues
Recovering from life-threatening illness • Rejoining civilian life after serving in the military
Helping everyone to reach their full potential • And much, much more*

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Tips for Getting Media Attention

Counseling Awareness Month - April 2018

April is Counseling Awareness Month, the perfect time for professional counselors to educate the public about the profession, they work they're doing and the important contributions they make to communities around the world.

Using the backdrop of this annual celebration, you can gain media attention for your work and the work of the profession. Consider doing something that helps get your professional counseling story out to the public in your area. The options include pitching local media outlets for a newspaper article; an appearance on a local television program; an interview on a radio program; an article in a local, regional, or national magazine; and other opportunities.

Focus on Something Newsworthy

Your media strategy should be focused on something newsworthy, such as an event you're involved with or a counseling-related story typical of stories you usually see covered in the media. The best approach is to begin to contact the media in March to pitch your story idea to editors and reporters. It's also perfectly acceptable to pitch the story in April—but keep in mind that the earlier in the month you make the pitch, the more likely you'll be able to get media attention during the month.

As you consider possible story ideas, ask yourself some questions:

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

Consider the following as possible pitches to the media:

Feature news:

- **A Counselor Can Help:** An in-depth look at a counseling program or programs focused on a key need or needs in a community. Include statistics that illustrate the importance of the program/s.
- **Helping Hands:** An in-depth look at a counseling program that provides free or reduced-price counseling to underserved populations in a community. Include statistics that indicate the need for programs of this type (how many people participate, has this number increased or decreased over time and more).

- An Inside Look at Counseling: A profile covering a day in the life of a professional counselor based at a school, agency, organization or in private practice.
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors: An inside look at a program sponsored by professional counselors, such as a coat drive for homeless shelter residents or volunteer homework help at a safe house for abused women.
- Learn More About It: A professional counselor's presentation to a local organization offers a good opportunity for a feature story in advance of the speech that explores the program the counselor will be discussing and points to the upcoming presentation.

Feature Story Sidebars:

- Counseling Credentials: What do they mean?
- Finding a Counselor in Your Community.

Business news:

- Professional counseling program introduces new service or program
- Professional counselor joins staff
- Professional counselor earns certification or licensure credential
- Professional counselor elected to local, state, or national organization office or appointed to a committee
- Professional counselor wins an award or earns an advanced degree

Editorial page contributions: Some newspapers publish guest editorials by subject matter experts.

- Consider writing an editorial on the way your community identifies and addresses the mental health issues/needs of its residents.

Identify Your Best Point of Contact

Before pitching a story idea to the media, be sure to read the newspaper or magazine, watch the television program, or listen to the radio program you're planning to contact. This will help you focus on the best story angle and the correct section or segment of the paper, magazine, or television or radio program. This will also help you identify the appropriate reporter to contact.

You can find contact information for media outlets on their websites. Emailing or calling is fine, once you have your pitch ready, with a story idea and key facts and statistics. Keep in mind that it's often easier to reach a reporter by email; don't rely solely on phone contact.

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