



DMC ACTION NETWORK MEDIA ADVOCACY TRAINING

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Media work: Why bother?

The media shapes the way the public understands youth crime

- According to a survey, 52% of policymakers reported that the mass media were their primary source of information on gangs.
- Three-quarters of the public (76%) say they form their opinions about crime from what they see or read in the news, while only 22% percent says they get their primary information from personal experience.

Media work: Why bother?

Media over report youth, specifically youth of color, in connection to crime, both as perpetrators and victims.

- Entman and Rojecki (2000) observed that African Americans were more frequently portrayed as suspects when compared to crime statistics; the media overrepresented African American perpetrators, underrepresented black victims, and overrepresented white victims.
- The same study found that African Americans were four times more likely than whites to have mug shots shown, and twice as likely to be filmed in the physical custody of a police officer, whether by being handcuffed, grasped, or restrained by the officer.



Negative media can usher in more punitive laws and policies...



Youths participating in a rally at the State Capitol sing *We Shall Overcome* to encourage the Legislature to pass the Mississippi Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Act of 2006 and the Indigent Juvenile Appeals Resource Council Act.



And positive media can pave the way for better legislation and practices

IF YOU COULD GET A HEADLINE
PRINTED IN YOUR NEWSPAPER
TOMORROW, WHAT WOULD IT
SAY?



Developing a media strategy: Do you have media GAME?

Goals: What are you trying to accomplish?

Audience: Who are the decision makers?

Messages: How do you communicate to promote change?

Execution: How do you get the media to cover the issue?

Messaging

Challenges

- Racial justice issues can be controversial
- Most people don't understand the problem
- Many think different treatment is caused by different offending
- Some think problem of resources, not race

Opportunities

- Core values of justice and fairness
- Youth deserve a second chance
- Media eager to sensationalize racial conflict

Elements of an effective message

- Communicate the problem
- Paint a picture of the solution
- Identify the action
- Use clear and simple language (talking points give you extra credit!)

Remember your interview ABCs!

- **A**ddress the questions;
- **B**ridge to your issue;
- **C**ommunicate your message.

Effective Messaging

How effective are these PSAs in getting across their message?



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Making the news

- Promote data
- Tell stories-point to larger issues through individual cases
- Highlight community events, or create your own
- Find a hook or media window
- Target your audience

A few tips

- Respect deadlines
- Know your media markets
- Build a relationship, be a resource

Crisis communications



- Don't react—strategize!
- Be accountable, not defensive
- Reframe and point to larger trends or numbers

What happens if...

Despite all your efforts something goes wrong—nobody comes!

Sometimes despite connecting the dots, crossing the t's and dotting the i's nothing happens and no reporters come a-callin'. This can happen and be prepared for it. Have a plan two and implement it immediately. Act as the reporter at your own event and collect some stories. Have a particularly touching story about a youth and his mentor? Call a reporter up and tell him about it. Write an op-ed about a troubled youth who, with the help of a mentor, turned around and tie it to the importance of mentoring programs. Don't be afraid to call that reporter up and tell him what he missed and let him know it's not too late to do a story!

If you run out of ideas—call JPI and let us help you find an angle.

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