

ODYSSEY HOUSE

Public Speaker's Manual

Prepared by: Heather Rousseau
Public Education Coordinator
1986



T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

1. Odyssey House History
2. Program History
3. Program Objectives
4. Public Education Coordinator Job Description
5. Expectations of Public Education Presenters
6. Presenter Flow Chart
7. Pointers for Effective Public Speaking
8. Helpful Hints for Speakers
9. Presentation Request Form
10. Presenter's Report
11. Evaluation Form
12. Speech Structure, Construction and Evaluation
13. Fear, Introductions and Speaking on the Spot
14. Gestures, Voice and Using Visual Aids
15. Using Humor in Public Speaking

HISTORY

The Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association was formed in September 1979 in response to a clear need for short-term accommodation for women. It was the height of the boom years. Housing was at a premium and there were a lot of women who had no place to stay. The MLA for Grande Prairie at the time, Elmer Borstad, along with a group of interested people from the community began to document the need for a women's shelter in Grande Prairie. Their first meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Margaret Bowes.

The Association incorporated as a non-profit society and worked from September 1979 to May 1980 on the needs assessment and a budget proposal and operating plan for a shelter. At that time the Federal Government approved a summer student works grant of \$11,900 to meet the cost of operating a residence for June, July and August - providing a building could be found.

A vacant, centrally-located, older home was found and a month-to-month lease negotiated for its use. It was called Croken House after the original owner. Health, fire and Municipal Planning Commission requirements were met after some renovations were made. With a \$3,000 emergency grant from the United Way to cover rent and utilities for the summer, Croken House opened on June 9, 1980 with 10 beds and 4 staff.

The residence received tremendous community support. Donations of beds, bedding, appliances, furniture came pouring in. Croken House lacked funding and licensing for full food services or laundry facilities. Wapiti Lodge, the men's hostel, allowed Croken House residence to eat lunches and dinners there as well as do house laundry.

Nearly 100 people attended our official opening ceremony June 25, 1980. A further grant was approved by the Federal Government enabling a staff increase to five.

In late June, 1980 the Province announced approval to an \$18,000 one-time grant to the Association. This allowed the residence to continue operating at the end of the summer student project. A permanent supervisor was hired in place of the summer student staff. The new supervisor promptly drew up a volunteer training program, which was implemented so that volunteers could augment the bare-bones staff.

The search for funding continued. The Province had a policy for ongoing funding for men's shelters but had no policy for women's and therefore could not fund same. MLA Elmer Borstad got a committee of MLA's to recommend just such a policy. Croken House stayed open through the winter on private donations and another one-time only grant from the Province for \$19,000, which arrived February 1981.

By January 1981, only eight months after opening, it became apparent that a ten bed shelter was not big enough. Full meal service was needed as well as a play area for the children and more office space for the staff. Not only was a larger facility needed but the service needed to be adjusted to provide the necessary support to the many battered women who were coming to the shelter.

A building committee was formed to look for a larger facility. An application to purchase a new facility was presented to the Clifford E. Lee Foundation in March 1981. The application was approved, with the Foundation agreeing to make the down payment on the present residence. The Association carried the mortgage until August 1983 at which time the Foundation agreed to pay off the balance owing on the house.

Meanwhile in-service training for staff and volunteers was initiated as was a modest public speaking program to increase community awareness of Croken House services.

In April 1981 the long awaited government policy was announced to provide support for operating costs of women's shelters. Association representatives attended province-wide meetings to help develop detailed policy guidelines and were among the founding members of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters.

Two obstacles arose before moving into the new building. One was an appeal to the Municipal Planning Commission by residents in the area who objected to having the residence in their neighbourhood. The Development Appeal Board ruled unanimously in favour of the residence at the hearing. The other obstacle was the need to carry out extensive renovations to change the existing fourplex into a workable residence. The renovations were a major job and again the community support was tremendous. About twenty local businesses donated their labour and materials for the project.

The new facility opened in September 1981 and was able to offer full meal service as well as secure doors, suitable office space, private counselling areas, and ample play areas both indoors and out. The services of an itinerant teacher was arranged for the children. Along with the new building came a new name - Odyssey House - to signify the beginning of an epic journey.

In October 1981 an application was submitted to the Secretary of State for funds to set up a resource centre and train volunteers to speak on family violence and Odyssey House services. One staff member was designated Public Education Coordinator. Since the expiration of that grant the Family and Community Support Services funds a one-half time public education position.

In the winter of 1981/1982 the Parks and Recreation Department responded to an application for money to install a fence and play equipment in the back yard.

Also in 1981/1982 a full-fledged Child Care Program was initiated. A full time Child Care Coordinator was hired to work with the children in the shelter and with the mothers. The philosophy of the program is to strive to meet the total needs of children in transition.

In 1984 Odyssey House spearheaded and remains a part of the Regional Steering Committee on Family Violence whose mandate is to coordinate services for women and children who are victims of family violence in the Northwest Region of the Province. This region covers approximately one third of the province and has only one residence. This Committee recommends to the government services required to address the area of family violence in this region.

In April 1984 Odyssey House initiated an Inter-Agency Committee to Address Family Violence whose mandate was to set up a treatment program for men who batter. On February 17, 1986 the Treatment Program for Men Who Batter began.

In January 1985 the first support and therapy group for battered women started. A therapist was hired to facilitate the group and house staff acts as co-therapist.

Early in 1985 Federal funding was received to run a one-year project to provide follow-up services to battered women and their children after leaving Odyssey House. This program is designed to provide friendship and emotional support to those families as the women make the transition to independent living.

To further meet the needs of women in battering situations, in November 1985 Odyssey House initiated information groups. These groups are conducted in the house four mornings a week from 10:00 a.m. until noon, and are open to residents and non-residents alike. The information covered in the Monday and Thursday groups is on battering and the Wednesday and Friday groups help battered women to build on their parenting skills.

Expansion to the existing facility began December 1985 and provided the house with a much needed addition to the indoor play area, as well as more office and resource centre space.

ODYSSEY HOUSE

Public Education Program

The Odyssey House Public Education and Awareness program began in September 1981. The program is facilitated by the Public Education Coordinator, who works under the direction of the house Supervisor, and in conjunction with the Public Education Committee. The committee is chaired by an individual who is a member of the Women's Residence Board of Directors. All information used for presentations is standard information approved by the Public Education Committee and updated on a continual basis.

Volunteers speaking on behalf of Odyssey House are required to attend a public speaking workshop. They will accompany the Public Education Coordinator, or a trained volunteer to initial public speaking engagements, and will present to their first audience with the assistance of the Coordinator or trained volunteer. Ideally all public speaking engagements will be attended by at least two members of the Odyssey House organization. This will ensure more complete coverage of information, and provide additional insight into the analysis of the audience and overall presentation.

When Odyssey House receives a request for public education, the request is forwarded to the Public Education Coordinator. The Coordinator may answer to the request, or may arrange for another staff member or volunteer to respond to the request. The individual responsible for the task will then contact the agency or organization making the request, to arrange for the speaking engagement.

To enhance our public education objectives, Odyssey House has compiled a resource library, with materials available to all Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association members. Annual memberships may be purchased by individuals for \$5.00 or organizations for \$20.00. Odyssey House also distributes pamphlets on the House services, battering and on the battered women's support group. The pamphlets are available in both French and English.

The public education material is preventive as well as informative. The degree of preventiveness increases with the heightened community awareness and personal commitments to decrease the occurrence of violence.

Odyssey House commitment to a high standard of public education insures that volunteers are equipped with current, accurate information. This goal is achieved through review of new materials, through workshops and through inservice meetings. High standards in quality of service is an ongoing commitment.



4.b) OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT: AWARENESS

Term of Projects: January 1, 1987 to December 31, 1987

Project Objectives:

1. Encourage communities to work cooperatively to prevent the occurrence of wife assault and family violence through:
 - a) participation in regular community events to increase awareness in the area of wife assault and related problems, and to familiarize the public with current resources and services available in this area.
 - i.e. - display and information booths
 - public education components in pre-marriage workshops
 - workshops on family violence during family education week
 - presentations to school teachers at annual conventions
 - respond to requests for information and presentations
 - b) maintain a resource library on issues pertinent to Odyssey House with special emphasis on family violence. Issues to be included but not limited to:
 - children in transition
 - suicide and depression
 - self-esteem building
 - single or co-parenting
 - alcoholism and drug abuse
 - women in the work force
- Target groups for library usage to include but not limited to:
- residents of Odyssey House
 - staff, Board, volunteers and membership of Odyssey House
 - educational instructors and students
 - medical staff
 - social services staff
 - community groups i.e. South Peace Council of Women, etc.

Project AWARENESS resources are used in the Battered Women's Information Group operating twice a week. The group focuses on information including:

- Definition of Battering
- Causes of Battering
- Characteristics of the Men
- Characteristics of the Women
- Why Women Stay
- How Battering Affects the Children

Project AWARENESS resources used for the group include the films:

- Up The Creek
- Shifting Gears
- Deck The Halls

Materials to be purchased this year include:

- No Place to Hide
- How to Talk So Kids Will Listen

2. Coordination and implementation of the volunteer component to provide resource people in Grande Prairie and area to speak on family violence and on Odyssey House services. The desired outcome:

- a) to dispel the myths surrounding family violence
- b) to demonstrate the need for services and support
- c) to develop an effective multi-disciplinary system for women and children in need.

Target groups to include but not limited to:

- community groups
- high school and college students
- R.C.M.P.
- medical staff
- social service agency staff

3. Ongoing promotion of Odyssey House and the services provided through the distribution of posters, pamphlets and other promotional materials.

The above objectives were developed to meet the Society's original program objectives.

GRANDE PRAIRIE WOMEN'S RESIDENCE ASSOC.

Public Education Coordinator

The Public Education Coordinator works with the Public Education Committee and the Supervisor to obtain direction in program development and to ensure Board awareness of Public Education activities.

Principal duties:

1. Responds to the need in the Peace River region for public education in the areas of family violence and services provided by the G.P.W.R.A.
2. Develops and implements public education programs on family violence and the services provided by the G.P.W.R.A.
3. Works with the Volunteer Coordinator to develop volunteer assistance to carry out public education programs. This includes:
 - a. Working with the Public Education Committee in setting up workshops for training public education volunteers.
 - b. Interviewing and selecting public education volunteers with the assistance of the Volunteer Coordinator and committee member(s).
 - c. Developing ongoing training for public education volunteers with the assistance of the Volunteer Coordinator.
4. Operates a library of resource materials with special emphasis on family violence. Other topics will include child care and development, suicide, women in the labour force and women and the financial system.
5. Promotes Odyssey House activities and programs as required by the Supervisor.
6. Develops and implements special public education programs as required.
7. Coordinates publication and distribution of a quarterly newsletter.
8. Keeps a record of all news releases, newsletters and press clippings relating to the G.P.W.R.A.
9. Keeps a record of all public education activities conducted by staff and volunteers.

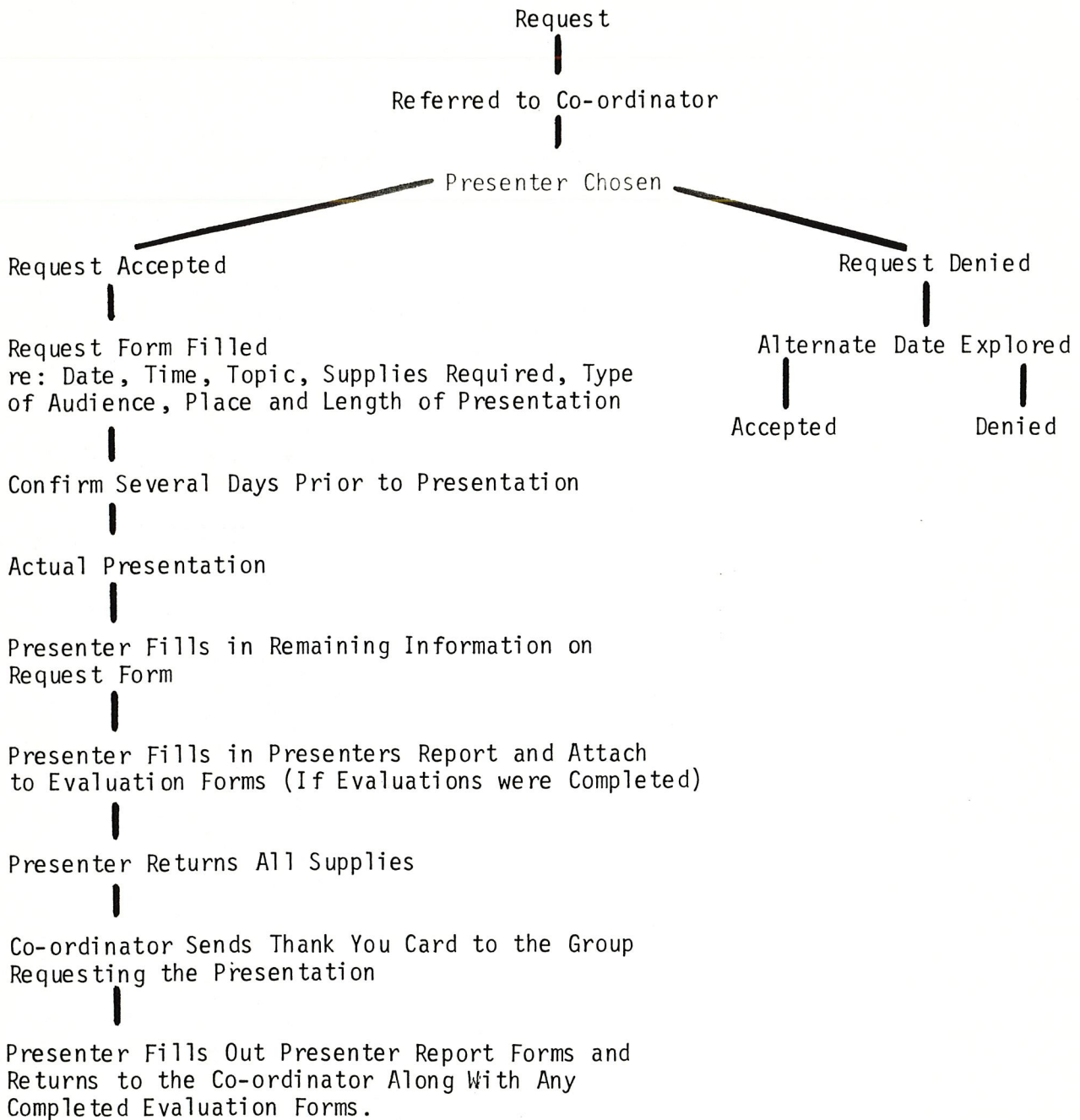
EXPECTATIONS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION PRESENTERS

1. Public Education Presenters will participate in a public speaking workshop. Presenters will accompany the Public Education Coordinator or a trained volunteer on their initial engagements. Two to three representatives of the shelter will attend all public speaking engagements when possible. Before you go, decide who will speak when, to avoid confusion when you are in front of your audience.
2. Always carry a copy of the presentation request form with you in case:
 - you get lost
 - you lose your own information on when, where and contact person
 - the unexpected or unknown factors
3. Always plan an extra 15 minutes into your arrival time. This will ensure that you have time to set up your equipment and establish some degree of comfort before you begin. The extra time may also give you grace if you should become lost.
4. Dress appropriately but not in a way that will make you uncomfortable. Remember you are representing the shelter and speaking on topics that people often feel uneasy with - realize that your audience may be quick to identify you with the type of person who may experience these problems and themselves with the type of person who has nothing to worry about. Any radically different language or dress will only encourage their disassociation from the topic.
5. Take along handouts: pamphlets, information sheets or articles, etc. This helps to generate information about the shelter services, about the presentation topic and will also serve as a reinforcer to your speech.
6. Give your audience suggestions on how they can help. This may be their personal commitment to act to decrease the acceptance of violence in our society, or it may be volunteer or temporal assistance to the shelter. In this way your audience is left with a challenge rather than a sinking feeling of hopelessness.

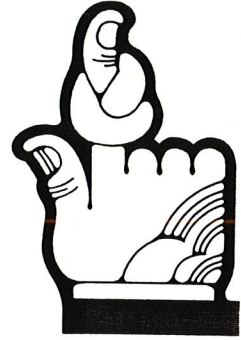
7. If you are experiencing any negative feelings or problems towards the shelter, speak to the Public Education Coordinator before accepting any public speaking engagements. It is inappropriate and unacceptable to project negative feelings or information about the shelter to your audiences. Our public support is gained through positive feelings of trust and respect. As a volunteer you are encouraged to bring any concerns forward, so they can be worked through to the benefit of all.
8. You may choose to take with you a blank request for presentation form. You may also wish to take names and phone numbers for any interested public education volunteers.
9. Following your presentation, fill in your Presenter Report Forms. This includes an evaluation of your presentation, audience response and questions of concern or interest. Attach this form to evaluation forms if they were completed by the audience. The points you have logged may be beneficial to the next speaker as well as to yourself. Routinely take time to read up on Presenter Reports and evaluations.



PRESENTER FLOW CHART



POINTERS FOR EFFECTIVE
PUBLIC SPEAKING



1. COMMIT YOURSELF:
 - invest your time and energy
 - preparation overcomes fear
2. ORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS:
 - be organized (introduction, points, conclusion)
 - do research and sort out items
 - reserve time to review your work
3. PRACTICE:
 - everything
 - do a dry run with a mirror, tape recorder or another person
 - time yourself
 - don't memorize (be spontaneous)
 - don't read it (know your material and use your own words)
4. DO AN AUDIENCE ANALYSIS BEFORE SPEAKING
 - who is out there?
 - why are they there?
 - what do they want from you?
 - what do you want from them?
5. THINK SIGHT AND SOUND:
 - present yourself credibly
 - how do I look - to myself?
 - to my audience?
 - include the audience
 - use eye contact - try to look at everyone at least once
 - don't concentrate on one person or area more than another
 - field questions effectively - make questioner feel good
 - reinforce your point
 - make sure what you are saying is understandable
 - how do I sound - monotone?
 - talk up, emphasize, vary pace, change pitch
 - watch body language - avoid folded arm stance
 - use gestures to emphasize points
 - use charts, graphs, films or other visuals
6. RELAX:
 - stay loose
 - arrive early enough to prepare
 - recognize nervousness as common when public speaking
7. ENJOY:
 - audience will enjoy you if you enjoy yourself
 - gain experience
 - there's a little "Ham" in all of us!

HELPFUL HINTS FOR SPEAKERS

1. If you haven't been introduced to the group, introduce yourself and your partner (if accompanied). If you are time limited you may request that questions be written down and asked following the presentation otherwise you may invite audience input.
2. Speaking - vary the speed at which you talk, when making an important point - slow down. Use pauses effectively. When asking a question, real or rhetorical - pause. Be sure you are speaking loud enough to be heard in the back row. To be sure participants can hear each other, repeat any questions or comments. Avoid swearing or "hip" speech (unless you feel it is appropriate or necessary). Be sensitive to the level of your audience - for instance, don't get hung up on academic jargon unless speaking to academics.
3. Body Language - use gestures that come naturally when you speak. Move toward the audience when you want them to comment or ask questions. Avoid putting your hands near your face, in addition to blocking your voice, it is often the type of body language displayed by people who lack confidence in what they are saying. Be alert to the body language of your audience. "Closed" signals (arms crossed, turning away, fidgeting, etc.) will usually tell you when there has been a change in the room environment, or when you have failed to answer a question adequately. When you pick up negative cues, check them out with your audience then act accordingly. Smiling or interspersing "heavy" information with light or even funny interludes will help your audience absorb and cope with the "heavies".
4. Cues - give your audience signals to help them follow your ideas. When covering a series of items, emphasize them by counting off the list. i.e. "There are five (5) reasons for first second " etc. Use transition words to connect ideas. Some examples of transitions are:
 - Introduction to a new topic. i.e. "Now lets look at the causes of the problem ..."
 - Questions. i.e. "That raises an important question."

5. Eye Contact - is very important to make your audience connect with you. If you can't look your audience in the eyes, try selecting a few friendly faces throughout the group and filter your focus among them. This technique may eventually help you achieve the desired eye contact with your entire audience.

6. Scripts - or note cards should be used only for reference. Reading a paper word for word is something an audience can do for themselves. Write headings larger or use oversized type and use key words or phrases to spur your own spontaneous response. True to life examples or anecdotes will help affix your presentation in the minds of your audience.

7. When answering questions DO NOT BLUFF! If you don't know an answer to a specific question, admit that you don't. You may want to research the question later and get back to the person who brought it up, or send your findings back to the group you addressed. If possible you may give an example admitting that it is not necessarily the rule.

8. Pay attention to questions and information raised during your presentation. Knowing and noting the concerns of one group may help you with your next engagement and will prevent your becoming stale and "automatic" in your presentations.

NERVOUSNESS - SOME DEAD GIVE-AWAYS OF LACK OF CONFIDENCE

Facial contortions: grimacing, frowning

Extreme gesturing: either flailing arms about or a frozen stupor

High shoulders: tight and tense

Poor eye contact: not looking at audience, looking at only part of the audience, looking only at cigarette, not looking at a person directly in her eyes.

Smoking: chain smoking, lighting wrong end of cigarette

Distracting gestures to head: scratching head, covering mouth, biting nails, hands over head (classic firing squad position), pulling at nose, ears, playing with hair.

Clearing throat: or swallowing excessively

Posture and stance: pacing, slouching, tapping feet, thumping fingers, fidgeting, leaning on podium

Defensiveness: arms crossed over chest, making fists, talking through clenched teeth, tight mouth

Voice problems: too low, too loud, cracking, ending every sentence with a question mark or the classic "feminine" titter, cluttering up sentences with "uhs" and "you knows".

NERVOUSNESS - WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Use your nervousness to sharpen your awareness of the situation - don't let it use you.

Don't drink. It dulls the senses (wait till later).

Eat lightly before you go to an engagement. A heavy meal feels like a brick in a stomach that's about to fly away.

Keep your body limber, in general.

If your hands are shaking noticeably, keep them at your sides or in your lap. Motionless hands indicate composure.

If you turn to face someone, move your whole body, not just your head or your eyes.

Take a few deep breaths to relax yourself before you begin.

In front of a large audience, make your gestures bigger, bolder and simpler. Remember to open your mouth wider and enunciate more clearly. Visualize a spot in the room to where you are sending your voice.

With a small group, try to sit in a position which makes you part of the group, i.e. part of a circle. This way, you're less of a target, easier to accept and harder to ignore.

Take note of what the audience is telling you in body language (boredom, withdrawal, defensiveness, tension, embarrassment.)

APPEARING ON TELEVISION AND RADIO

Being interviewed on radio or television is sometimes more frightening than speaking before a live audience. While you are being watched or listened to by thousands of people, you can see none of them. If it is possible for you to visit the radio station or television studio before the actual interview, do so. Have a look at the cameras and other equipment and if possible have someone show you how the equipment works.

If you are being interviewed, you will probably meet with the interviewer beforehand, and discuss the topics that will be covered. A helpful interviewer will prepare questions with you so that you are both adequately prepared. In the limited time offered by most radio or television interviews, it is impossible to say everything you feel you should, so make a list beforehand of the major points you want to include.

TELEVISION:

1. Once on television, it is best to ignore the cameras and try to carry on a conversation as you would otherwise.
2. If you wish to look directly at the tv audience, make sure you know how to tell which camera is on.
3. Try not to look at the monitor.
4. Be aware of signals (commercial break coming up) and where they will be coming from.
5. Avoid wearing white or clanky metallic jewellery.
6. If using visual aids remember the ratio: four units high by five units wide to be seen on the tv screen.
7. Speak in a normal speaking voice.
8. Nervous gestures are accentuated on tv. Concentrate on avoiding those without appearing stiff.

RADIO

1. On radio the audience can't see the unconscious "body language" which you use with the interviewer.
2. Be careful not to interrupt - it comes across as audial confusion.
3. Try not to change the subject and leave sentences dangling in mid air.
4. Work out beforehand silent signals for such things as "I'll answer this one" and "Please help me out".

"Helpful Hints" adapted from Fort McMurray Unity House "Speaker's Bureau Manual" 1985