Getting the Story Right
Working with Journalists

Dan Rutz  CDC
Kim Ahanda USAID
Emily Bass AVAC
Zenawit Melesse, UNAIDS
Julie Samuelson WHO
Barbara Nanteza Uganda MoH
Five Steps to Effective News Media Engagement

Presentation content may or may not reflect official US Government positions or policy.
Positive Coverage: Worth More than a Gusher

• It’s Efficient
• It’s Far-reaching
• It’s Influential
• It’s Free
• It’s Valuable

1. Recognize and seize media opportunities
News: A Point in Time

News

- Reflects condensed reality
- Highlights a portion of the whole
  - Is subjectively ordered
- Appeals to popular interest
- Is impulsive, condensed, fleeting
  - Is increasingly speculative

the communication of selected information on current events (issues) which is presented by print, broadcast, Internet, or word of mouth to a third-party or mass audience

Shirkey, Clay (2008)
Anatomy of a Story

Headline (Highlights the most newsworthy or dramatic development)

Lead (Answers the questions: who, what, when, where, why)

Supporting facts, figures, examples, anecdotes

Third Party Validation

Paraphrase lead

Begin with most important information

Public pays attention to the headline and lead
VMMC is Newsworthy

You can:

- Educate
- Persuade
- Remind
- Recruit
- Organize

“Safe Male Circumcision...
Should, however, always be considered an important component of HIV/AIDS prevention.”

Circumcision
not equal to prevention

By Emmanuel Rapowa

GABORONE - Safe Male Circumcision (SMC) programme manager, Dr Adrian Musiige has said that male circumcision does not prevent HIV/AIDS, but simply reduces the risk of infection. It should however always be considered an important component of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Dr Musiige was talking to journalists at a breakfast meeting on SMC last week. He noted the relevance of the media in dissemination, and implored all stakeholders to come aboard to share the responsibility of reducing HIV/AIDS to achieve the target of zero new infections by 2016.

He said the benefits of the SMC included better hygiene, reduction in occurrence of penile cancer, genital warts, and phimosis in males.

It also reduces occurrence of vaginal infections, cancer of the cervix when used with other safer sex interventions, helps reduce the risk of HIV transmission.

Dr Musiige emphasised the importance of circumcision from the olden days and its relevance today, adding that it was about benefit risk balance.

He also noted that there was need for great emphasis on interpersonal communication through road shows, jam sessions, targeted campaigns such as in schools, communities and new collaborations through traditional leadership and NGOs such as NACA. The objective of the meeting was to provide updated information on the current status of SMC programme. BOPA
Renew commitment to male circumcision

• Op-Ed – Your Message
• It’s Far-reaching
• It’s Influential
• It’s Free
• It’s Valuable

“We are therefore, calling on all leaders...to support VMMC!”

We have made great strides in the fight against HIV in the past decade. HIV treatment has saved millions of lives around the world and fewer people are becoming infected with HIV. But to continue to reduce new infections, we must use every option available.

One important prevention option is voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC). Evidence from three clinical trials in Kenya, Uganda and South Africa and from more than five years of real-world roll-out programmes confirms that VMMC is effective in reducing – by more than 60% — a man’s risk of HIV infection.

The outcome of the trials confirmed what public health experts had observed in some communities over a period of more than a decade. The data showed that if men were circumcised early in life and engaged in regular sexual activity, the incidence of HIV infection among uncircumcised men was lower than for those who were not circumcised.

We therefore call on all leaders - political and traditional leaders, religious and community leaders, youth and women leaders, professional and business leaders - to support VMMC, a simple, cost-effective, one-time intervention that provides a lifetime of partial protection against HIV. Indeed, VMMC must be a critical component of our plans to end new HIV infections in our countries and communities.

The article was co-authored by Dr. Christine Ondoa, Uganda’s Minister of Health; Dr. Spaciola Wandira, former Uganda’s Vice-President; Angelo Kagwa – AVAC Staff member (Uganda); Dr. Olumpe Oginga – Deputy minister of finance, Kenya; Dr. Kawango Agot – Impact Research & Development Organization (Kenya); Chief Jonathan Mumeni XI – Leader of the Kondele People (Zambia); Blessing Chibundo – MP and Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Parliamentarians Against Aids (ZIPA).
Timing is Everything

- Reporters (News) Can’t Wait
- Say Yes
- Be Prepared
- Answer & Add Your Message
- Be the Best VMMC Source

2. Make media engagement a priority
Familiarity Breeds Opportunity

- Consume the News
- Observe By-lines
- Introduce Yourself
- Praise Good Coverage
- Pitch Valid Stories

3. Know your news media landscape
Journalism Workshops

- Educate Reporters
- Provide Sources
- Show “Common Ground”
- Instill Pride
- Encourage Responsible Coverage

4. Provide training to improve quality
Society’s Conscience

A Maddening Headache

As psychiatric cases increase in Nigeria, the country records a decline in the number of experts and quality of facilities

By OLIVIA M. OYEREBI

There were times when the Yoruba people of Osun State, southwest Nigeria, were known for their generosity and hospitality. But today, the same cannot be said. In many parts of the state, people are living in poverty and suffering from various mental illnesses. The government has taken steps to address this issue, but it seems to be only a temporary solution.

The state government has established several mental health centers across Osun State, but they are not well-equipped to handle the number of cases. Many people are being diagnosed with mental illnesses, but they do not have access to proper treatment. The situation is worsened by the fact that many of the patients cannot afford the cost of treatment.

The government has also launched a campaign to raise awareness about mental health issues. However, the campaign has not been able to reach many people, especially those who live in rural areas. The lack of awareness about mental health issues makes it difficult for people to seek treatment.

The situation in Osun State is not unique. Across Nigeria, mental health issues are on the rise. The country is facing a mental health crisis, and it is urgent that something is done to address it.

It is important for the government to increase the number of mental health facilities and ensure that they are well-equipped to handle the number of cases. They should also provide training for mental health professionals and ensure that they are available to provide treatment to those who need it.

In conclusion, the situation in Osun State is a cause for concern. The government needs to take immediate action to address the mental health crisis in the state. It is time to prioritize mental health care and provide the necessary resources to ensure that those who need it receive the care they deserve.
Managing Negative News

- Journalist’s job is not Our Job
- All Negative News is not Equal
- We can be Wrong
- Timely Notice Buys Valuable Time
- There are Remedies

5. Be Strategic with Your Response
Managing Negative News

- Decision Tool?
- Training for Us?
- Coordination?
- Media Monitors?
- Share Best Practices?

**In your own words, restate the inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise damaging information:**

**The Message: Check all that apply**

- Message is essentially false and poses an overt risk to human health   6
- Message is essentially false and poses serious risk to public trust in our program or recommended public health intervention 5
- Message is essentially false but does not pose serious risk to public trust in our program or recommended public health intervention 2
- Message is essentially false but poses minimal or no serious risk to public trust in our program or recommended public health intervention 1
- Message is essentially false and reflects negatively on a person or persons in leadership or other key roles associated with our program, including partners 5
- Message is essentially or partially true but could pose serious risk to public trust to our program or recommended public health intervention * 2
- Message is essentially or partially true but poses minimal or no risk to public trust in our program or recommended public health intervention* 0
- Message is essentially or partially true and reflects negatively on a person or persons in leadership or other key roles associated with our program, including partners 1
- Message appears one time only, and shows no signs of becoming part of a recurring or evolving wave of criticism (Do not apply if first box is checked, i.e. 6 points) –1
- Message is a continuance of or is likely to trigger a sustained wave of criticism, in one or more major media outlets 5

**TOTAL**  (If ≤ 2, consider not formally responding; if > 2 continue to next step)

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* Message appears one time only, and shows no signs of becoming part of a recurring or evolving wave of criticism (Do not apply if first box is checked, i.e. 6 points) –1
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