

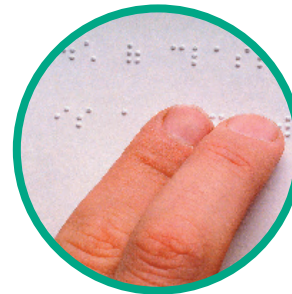
CT REAL CHOICE

This report was funded under a Real Choice Systems Change Grant (#18-P-91541/1) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to the Connecticut Department of Social Services and the University of Connecticut
A.J. Papanikou Center for Developmental Disabilities
October 2006



The University of Connecticut
A.J. Papanikou Center for Excellence
In Developmental Disabilities
Education, Research and Service

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Using Local Media
to Promote Community Inclusion



This guide is designed to assist people with disabilities and families who care for a child with a disability to use local media sources to raise awareness about community inclusion. Following the three steps outlined in this guide will help you develop a successful strategy for getting your message into the local media.

STEP 1: *Create A Media List*

- ✓ List all the local media sources you can think of: newspapers, television, radio, internet, newsletters, etc.
- ✓ Be creative; does your religious community have a media source?
- ✓ Town websites can also be a helpful resource (see Appendix A for a list of helpful resources)



APPENDIX A:

RESOURCES TO IDENTIFY LOCAL MEDIA

Congress.org

Website:

<http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home/>

Description: If you scroll to the bottom of the page there is a search box titled “Browse: Local Media.” Just enter your zip code to view a list of local media sources in your area.

State of Connecticut, Secretary of State

Website:

<http://www.sots.ct.gov/RegisterManual/SectionX/PRESS.htm>

Description: This link provides a list of local media print sources available in Connecticut, listed by town.

State of Connecticut Towns and Cities

Website:

<http://www.ct.gov/ctportal/cwp/view.asp?a=843&q=257266>

Description: Provides a list of all the town and city websites for Connecticut.

At one of the regional forums on community inclusion, a woman summarized her experiences working to promote community inclusion and offered the following simple, yet powerful words of advice: “You gotta go get ‘em.”

So what are you **waiting for?**

Follow these three steps to use your local media sources to promote community inclusion:



Step 1. *Create a Media List*



Step 2. *Develop Your Message*



Step 3. *Contact Your Local Media Sources*
using the 3 P's:

- ✓ *Professionalism*
- ✓ *Patience*
- ✓ *Persistence*

STEP 2: *Develop A Message*

Stories that involve real people and real events are easier to relate to and attract a larger audience. For example, Phyllis Zlotnick told participants at the Interburst workshop that to her community inclusion means “not feeling like I’m being put into something. It feels as though I am a part of something.”

To help develop your message in your own voice, try answering the following questions:

- ✓ What does community inclusion mean to you?
- ✓ What do you see as the primary barriers to community inclusion?
- ✓ What are some strategies that might be adopted to overcome these barriers?



STEP 3: CONTACT LOCAL MEDIA

When contacting the media you will increase your likelihood of success if you remember the 3 P's: Professionalism, Patience, and Persistence.

Professionalism

Act in a respectful, courteous, businesslike manner. If you call a radio show, remember to be respectful at all times. When writing, edit your material. Finally, develop professional relationships with media sources.

Patience

Understand that change takes time. Participants at the regional forums on community inclusion identified patience as being an integral component of a successful inclusion strategy.

Persistence

Continue to contact your local media if your letter does not get published. Your persistence will show the editor the importance of community inclusion!



The following are two methods you can use to contact your local media sources.

1. Write a Letter to the Editor or an Opinion Editorial Article

Letters to the editor can be written in response to an article or to bring attention to an issue. An opinion editorial (op-ed) is longer than a letter to the editor and is often written in response to a featured article. Here are some suggestions to keep in mind when writing:

- review the publication for guidelines (if you can not find any contact your local paper)
- make sure your response is timely
- double check your facts
- inform readers about why the issue is important and what they can do about it
- keep it simple; tell them what you have to say, say it, and then tell them what you said

2. Call a Radio Show

The sound of a human voice can personalize a message and capture the attention of your audience. When calling a local radio program, remember these pointers:

- familiarize yourself with the program you will be calling and the style of the talk show host
- know what you want to say
- drive home the point that community inclusion is an issue that affects everyone