



School Social Work
Association of America

ILLUMINATE THE IMPACT SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA: ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR CLEAR AND IMPACTFUL COMMUNICATION



SET THE STAGE ON FIRE

These strategies will help you command the spotlight, stay on message, and leave a lasting impression, whether you're speaking on camera, on air, or in front of a microphone.

- 🔥 **Suit Up to Shine:** Just like a fire needs the right fuel, your appearance should be the right match for your message. Solid, neutral colors work best as they are less distracting on camera. Avoid overly bright patterns or logos, which can draw attention away from your words. The goal is to look polished and confident without overshadowing your message. Your clothing should help you feel empowered and at ease, enabling you to focus on delivering a strong, clear message.
- 🔥 **Ignite Your Message:** Every media interview begins with a clear message, and your goal is to ensure that message is heard. Before stepping in front of the camera or microphone, refine your key points and decide what you want to emphasize. Focus on the "takeaway" for the audience—what do you want them to remember from this interaction? Your message should be simple, direct, and aligned with your personal or organizational goals.
- 🔥 **Fuel the Conversation:** Don't just answer questions—use them as an opportunity to steer the conversation back to your main message. Even if the topic shifts or the interviewer asks tough questions, find a way to return to your key points. Have examples and anecdotes ready to support your statements and make them relatable. Think of each question as fuel to keep your conversation moving in the right direction.
- 🔥 **Turn Up the Heat:** Speak with conviction, energy, and enthusiasm to make a strong impact. Whether on TV, radio, or a podcast, your presence matters just as much as your message. Speak with clarity and power, and don't be afraid to show passion for the subject. The more engaged you are, the more engaging you'll be to your audience. This is your chance to shine—let your energy reflect your passion and expertise.
- 🔥 **Stay Fireproof:** Media interviews can feel intense, and negative or challenging questions can throw anyone off balance. It's important to stay calm and remain focused on your message. If you're faced with an aggressive interviewer or an unexpected question, don't let it rattle you. Answer with poise and don't be afraid to redirect the conversation to your talking points. You've got the firepower—use it strategically.
- 🔥 **Keep the Flame Alive:** The end of your media interaction is just as critical as the beginning. Don't leave the audience hanging with an unfinished thought. Wrap up your interview with a strong, clear closing statement that reinforces your key message and calls the audience to action. Whether it's a takeaway message or an invitation for further engagement, make sure your final words leave a lasting impression and keep the flame of your message burning long after the interview ends.