

GUIDELINES FOR TELEVISION REPORTING ON HIV/AIDS

Reporting for television in the Caribbean is filled with rewards and challenges, although we are often not aware of the rewards until reaching the editing room. That's where the raw material that resulted from all the planning and production becomes an idea made manifest. The only problem is, if your raw material lacks quality, either technically or due to lack of foresight, your end product will be disappointing. Following are guidelines to help you focus on getting the best possible results.

Key Facts to Remember About HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean When Planning Your Story

- The Caribbean region is the second most HIV/AIDS affected region in the world after sub-Saharan Africa.
- AIDS is the leading cause of death among 15-44 year olds in the region.
- There is significant variation in the epidemic's impact on the region based on countries' cultural, ethnic and geographic uniqueness.
- In the Caribbean, HIV is spread primarily through heterosexual sex.
- Many countries have local HIV/AIDS awareness programs in place that provide general awareness about the disease. However, myths, superstitions and misinformation still persist across the region.
- Social issues have a significant impact on the growth of the epidemic in the region. Those issues include stigma against the topic, discrimination against the homosexual community and gender inequalities. They create a snowball effect by making conversations about HIV/AIDS taboo, which results in denial about the epidemic and an increase in high-risk behaviour, which results in fear of HIV testing and the related fear of being determined HIV positive and ultimately being socially ostracized.
- There is still an overall perspective that "other people" or "bad people" become infected with HIV or "this can't happen to me".

The Story or Concept

Renata Simone has given an excellent guide to writing your story, which can be found at the front of this manual.

The Outline

- When you are writing your director's outline, indicate clearly what video images you would like to accompany the voice-overs. Also indicate possible B-roll (or cover footage) for use during interviews.
- When proposing a report for *LIVE UP; The Show*, always send the script outline complete with all facts and figures to be used. Verify the accuracy of these statistics by using some of the resources listed in this manual. A good place to start is: <http://globalhealth.kff.org/>

Planning the Production Day(s)

- When possible choose locations that are easy to work in. Find an area where you can control the light and sound. Air conditioners and other loud sounds are very distracting.
- Plan to shoot your subject against a similarly toned background. This avoids either features that are too dark or a background that is burnt out. (However, this effect can be used to protect anonymity.)
- Schedule time to shoot B-Roll (or coverage footage) which will be very important to creating a visually interesting story.

- Unless the storyline calls for something different, include beauty shots of the island/region and generic street scenes.
- Ensure that you have Release Forms that can be signed prior to or immediately following taping.

Taping Day

- Always check that the camera lens is spotless. (If you are taping near the ocean, clean the lens frequently as spotting can occur.)
- Have the cameraman do a “white balance” before each interview.
- Check that the camera is level.
- If possible, ensure that air conditioning units and any other machines are switched off when taping audio.
- Try to make B-Roll (or cover footage) as interesting as possible. Shoot B-Roll with minimal movement—i.e. slow pan, tilt or zoom with still shots at the beginning and end of the movement.
- Label tapes *clearly* to save time when you are editing.
- Always carry extra tapes and batteries.
- Always get Release Forms signed.

When you have edited your television report, consider whether a radio version is an option. Sometimes a simple edit can double the reach of your report.