

How to Get Publicity for School Social Workers

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Positive stories about school social work activities promote our profession. Stories about school social work also increase public awareness and understanding about our profession.

Two main ways of getting coverage in newspapers:

1. Promote an activity or an event.
2. Be a professional resource, or “source” for a story.

Make a contact. Establish a relationship:

- Reporters are more likely to contact someone they know. If they are covering an issue of recent interest they are more likely to call a source already known to them, especially when a deadline is looming.
- Call your local newspaper. Introduce yourself to the person who covers education stories in your local newspaper. Let this person know your areas of expertise and issues on which you could be a resource. (E-mail is another good way to make contact with reporters.)
- Let the paper know about “photo-ops”. Call at least two weeks in advance of your event. Ask for the city editor.

Types of stories that get coverage:

- Fun, topical stories.
- Stories that positively promote youth.
- Training programs that improve school environments: peer mediation, anti-bullying programs, violence prevention programs.
- Community service projects: clean-ups, gardening, house building, visiting nursing homes.

Points to remember:

- Give ample advance notice – at least two weeks prior to the event.
- Do not call near the paper’s deadline time. No one will have time to talk with you.
- Make things easier for the reporter. Type up (double-spaced) all the important information yourself. Include: who, what, when where and why. Include a contact name, phone number and e-mail.
- Do not submit your own photos. Newspapers like to take their own.
- Make sure your administrator knows you are contacting the press if it relates to school activities.
- Maintain confidentiality
- Get consent for pictures and interviews from students and parents.
- Don’t be disappointed if you don’t get coverage.
- Keep the relationship positive.
- Give ample advance notice – at least two weeks prior to the event.