

media & advocacy

media exposure

action



Getting on Radio and Television

During the Action phase of *SASA!* you will want to bring the momentum of *SASA!* to life through the live mediums of radio and television. Although it can at times be challenging to get on radio or television, the effort is well worth it. Radio and television engage people in lively and healthy debate. They portray people's emotions through their voices and body language, creating an immediate personal connection with the listener or viewer. Radio and television can make people angry, elated, passionate, enraged, enthusiastic, and fired up to take action.

There are many radio stations—big, small, in English or local languages, some run by NGOs, some big commercial businesses. There are fewer television stations, but the number of local television stations is also increasing. Identify the stations in your community.

Call-in Shows

Talk Shows & News Commentary

Sometimes radio and television stations need “experts” to talk about a certain topic. These topics are usually related to current news items. You or any member of the *SASA!* team can offer yourselves as experts on issues of power, violence against women, HIV/AIDS and women's rights. Here are some examples:

Call-In Shows

Some radio and television stations have call-in shows, when a certain topic is discussed and an “expert” is available to take calls from listeners.

Talk Shows

Some radio and television stations have daily talk shows that discuss popular topics in the news. The show will often include one or more “experts” to present their expertise on the topic.

News Commentary

When radio and television stations are creating a news report, they sometimes need people with related experiences to comment or share their personal stories.



Become An Expert



To increase your chances of being called on as an “expert,” try the following:

- Build relationships with radio and television staff:
 - Identify radio and television journalists covering stories about violence and HIV/AIDS, and identify the producers of call-in shows and talk shows popular in your community.
 - Write a letter to everyone you have identified. Introduce yourself as an expert on the issues of violence against women and HIV/AIDS and offer to appear on call-in shows, talk shows, or for interviews. Include a press kit about your organization or give the *SASA!* brochure which makes a case for your expertise.
 - Make a follow-up call for each of these letters. Request a brief in-person meeting with each of the contacts, so that they can see and hear how confidently you present yourself.
- Maintain these relationships:
 - Every few months, send a short correspondence to these contact with information about your organization's recent community initiatives.
 - If you publish an article in a newspaper or magazine, or if another media outlet writes a story about your work, send a copy of the articles or transcripts to these radio and television media contacts.
 - With each communication explain that you are happy to share your experiences on their shows or with their journalists, if ever appropriate and helpful.
 - Be sure to invite these contacts to any press conference your organization holds and to send them any press releases your organization creates.



Before

a Radio or Television Interview

If you have been asked to be on television or radio, here are some ideas to keep in mind:

Listen to or watch the show.

Know the style and format of the show you will be on. Is it a serious show or does the interviewer like to joke around and entertain? Is it a call-in show or will you be debating issues with an expert holding an opposing view? Do you have half an hour, or just five minutes? It is helpful to be familiar with the show so that you are comfortable and prepared.

Learn about the audience.

Find out who will be listening so that you can have answers that fit the audience. For example, if the listeners or viewers are urban school-aged youth, you are likely to provide different information and in a different style than if the show is geared toward older rural farmers.

Talk before you get on the air.

Try to sit down and talk with the interviewer before the show starts. Get a feel for their style, and get comfortable with how they ask questions. Try to find out as much as you can about the kind of questions you will be asked. Don't expect them to tell you the exact questions—interviewers often like to catch their guests off guard.

Be prepared.

This is so important! You are an “expert” on this topic. Know your topic. Be on top of current events related to the issue. Be aware of and understand any pending legislation or related controversies. Be ready to answer tough questions about where you or your organization stands on these points. Be able to defend your position and back it up with facts. Prepare a list of key points, along with facts and figures to review before the interview. For radio, you can bring this information on one page just in case, but don't get caught shuffling through papers and trying to dig up facts while on the air. You will appear disorganized and unprofessional.

Practice!

Know the key idea that you want to get across about violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Try to write it down in a few sentences. Try to say it in several different ways—in 10 seconds, 15 seconds, 30 seconds. The more times you say the same thing in different ways, the easier it will be to convey your message when put on the spot by the interviewer.

During a Radio or Television Interview

Dress smart.

If going to a radio studio, choose professional clothing. Listeners will not see you, but you will want to make a positive impression on your interviewer. If preparing for an interview on camera, make sure you are not wearing detailed patterns or any colors that distracts viewers.

Relax.

If you're nervous, viewers and listeners can tell. And a nervous person doesn't sound like they know what they are talking about. It helps to pretend that you are just having an intimate conversation with a close friend. Forget about the microphone; try not to let it intimidate you.

Be passionate.

The issue of violence against women and its connection to HIV/AIDS is very powerful. Don't shy away from it. Let your feelings about the injustice show through. Let your passion for change be obvious. Your voice can help to persuade people. It can encourage and inspire. It can motivate and give hope!

Talk slowly and keep your statements simple.

Be prepared to make your points short. Speak slowly and clearly. Pay attention to the interviewers, as they will likely give you clues to stop talking. If you don't take them, they'll just cut you off.

Make your point. And repeat it.

The key message that you have practiced should come out early and often in the interview. Sometimes, people tune into a program half way through, and they may have missed your point. The more times you make it, the more people will hear it.

Avoid one-word answers.

When you are asked a question, try to repeat the question when you give your answer. This gives more strength to your response and creates a complete thought for anyone who just tuned in. For example, if asked "What percentage of women in sub-Saharan Africa are HIV positive?" don't just answer "61 percent." Answer: "In sub-Saharan Africa, 61 percent of all HIV positive people are women."

Name names.

Say the names of politicians and policy makers who are not doing enough, who take an opposite stance or who are advocating for positive change. Call for change, action and accountability.

Don't be rude.

Being confrontational is good, but being rude is not. Say provocative things to get people thinking, talking and acting. But don't insult people or demean them. Your argument loses weight when you sound mean or unprofessional.

Call for action.

Inspire viewers and listeners to take action. Explain how small actions add up to a big change. Explain how community members can hold discussions with friends and family, write letters, contact politicians, report violence and support women who need assistance.

Don't get defensive.

Interviewers like to be provocative to get a reaction from you. Don't take the bait! Stay calm and on topic. Know that it is not personal, that they have nothing against you. This is their way to make the show interesting and to provoke viewers and listeners to call in. You are the expert on the issue, so the host is relying on you to provide the facts—to react to each statement and to spur debate. So know your stance and make sure your position is strong. If you can't defend it, you aren't well enough prepared.

Tell the truth.

If you don't know an answer, don't lie or make something up. Admit that you don't know, and offer your website, phone number or other ways for a caller, listeners or viewers to get the answer.

Remember where you are.

Sometimes you might be interviewed in the studio, especially if it is a call-in show. But, other times, radio and television stations may want to talk to you while you are on the job.

- If a radio station wants to call you in the field, while they are live on the air, try to find a quiet place with few distractions. Ensure that there is as little background noise as possible. No matter where you are sitting, remember to focus your thoughts on being on air.
- If a television station wants to shoot you in the field remember to get permission from any community members who would be included on camera. While on camera, be professional but be yourself.

Be gracious.

After the interview, be sure to thank your host, fellow guests, callers and audience. Even if there was tension and even if the debate turned ugly, remember it is part of the process of getting information out there. It is not personal. People who are good debaters are always gracious. They know how to separate personalities from issues. If an interviewer knows that you are not only intelligent about the issue, but that you can take the heat too, they will be much more likely to ask you back. Also, listeners and viewers will be impressed with your professionalism.

Be aware of your body language and facial expressions.

On television, non-verbal language will influence how people hear your message. On radio, it may influence your tone of voice.

For television consider the following:

- Even when you are not the one talking, be alert and interested. There are often many cameras in use, and you never know when they will show your face.
- Try to casually use your hands and your body when you speak, so that you are interesting to look at as well as to listen to.
- Avoid coming across as lecturing, by smiling, leaning forward to show interest, and not crossing your arms or using other defensive postures.



Maintain your media presence!

Use the ideas
in all phases of SASA!

to keep the public dialogue
on violence against women
and
HIV/AIDS active.



www.raisingvoices.org/sasa.php