**CORONA COVID-19 VIRUS MEDIA COVERAGE**

***—RESPONSIBILITY-VIGILANCE-SAFETY—***

***BRIEF ADVICE TO MEDIA PRACTITIONERS***

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**MAIN POINTS**

1. ***TIMES OF CRISIS DEMAND MEDIA SERVE A CRUCIAL CIVIC ROLE TO INFORM AND GUIDE THEIR AUDIENCES***
2. ***ANY MOMENT OF CRISIS REQUIRES MEDIA HEIGHTEN THEIR WATCHDOG VIGILANCE TO HELP ASSURE CITIZENS ARE BEST SERVED BY GOVERNMENT AND ALL PARTS OF SOCIETY***
3. ***MEDIA WORKERS MUST TAKE ACTIVE MEASURES IN THEIR WORK FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF ALL!***
4. ***MEDIA’S CIVIC ROLE TO INFORM AND GUIDE AUDIENCES***
5. **Report Responsibly:**

* ***DO NO HARM*** isour first guiding principle in times of crisis.
* **Publish** *nothing* that does not come from credible sources, such as the World Health Organization.
* **Provide** *credible evidence* for anything you report by citing the organizations and people who are sources for your information.
* **Avoid** words or descriptions that scapegoat or assign blame, or sensationalize dangers.
* **Inform audiences** of any widespread false and/or especially dangerous rumors or “fake news”, and refute with credible evidence.

1. **Guide Your Audiences:**

* **Explain** in very clear language **solutions** to challenges, and what **actions** people should take to keep themselves and others safe; for example, “social distancing” and hand-washing.
* **Illustrate** with simple graphics and images to reinforce safety messages.
* **Offer** further resources for audiences to obtain credible information.
* **Include** credibleinformationand voices from civil society groups that are close to people on the ground and can raise concerns of marginalized groups.

1. ***MEDIA’S WATCHDOG VIGILANCE***

***Media should heighten their impartial scrutiny of actions of government and non-state actors to help assure citizens are best served by government and all parts of society***

Examples could include:

* Is government making decisions based on evidence and best practice?
* Are officials making fair and efficient use of resources for the greatest good?
* Are businesses addressing the Corona crisis responsibly, without seeking windfall profits?
* Are civil society groups mobilizing to address Corona?
* Are any people or groups exploiting the Corona crisis to scapegoat or demonize others?
* Are any media outlets irresponsibly reporting rumors, “fake news”, mis- or disinformation?

1. ***TAKE ACTIVE MEASURES IN YOUR WORK FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL!***

* ***Follow and share the advice of health authorities.***
* ***All media workers should take active measures to assure the health of themselves, their colleagues, and anyone with whom they interact!***
* ***Be sensitive of the psychological and potentially traumatic impact of media attention on those affected by Corona.***
* ***Be aware that reporting on the suffering of others can cause trauma to those reporting as well!***

**FURTHER RESOURCES:**

**WHO “Myth-Buster”**

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

**Your Government Resources**

[**https://www**](https://www)

**Media Coverage Tips**

<https://tinyurl.com/newsliteracy-corona>

<https://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/public-health/covid-19-coronavirus-epidemiology/>

<https://reframe.resolvephilly.org/covid-19/language/>

<https://reframe.resolvephilly.org/covid-19/framing/>

<https://www.snopes.com/news/2020/02/14/coronavirus-how-media-coverage-of-epidemics-often-stokes-fear-and-panic/>

**Covering Traumatic Events**

<https://dartcenter.org/resources/covering-coronavirus-resources-journalists>

**Journalist Safety Tips**

<https://cpj.org/2020/02/cpj-safety-advisory-covering-the-coronavirus-outbr.php>

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*A report on some of his work with media & civil society* [*may be found here.*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JyET7J5xtTdn4E_6YMd2oWxR_FiR4q7r/view)

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