



Guidelines for dealing with the media

Try to gain some control of the situation

This will be one of the most difficult things to do when faced by the media. Often people feel that by speaking to or communicating with the media they are keeping some control - certainly you will have no control if you refuse to deal with the media in some form or other.

Do not be brow-beaten into talking to the media

Never be bullied into speaking to the media. Be aware, however, that if you refuse to talk they will not simply give up and go away.

If you decide to speak to the media make sure you are not drawn into talking about areas you do not want to get into

Tell them only what you want them to know. Do not be drawn into discussing any personal matters you are not at ease with.

Do not be afraid to show emotion

Many people feel it is a weakness to show emotion. It is not a weakness. Emotional turmoil is an entirely natural reaction and it would be wrong to bottle this up even in front of the media.

Have somebody you trust with you for support

Do not be afraid to insist on having a friend, member of the family, work colleague, solicitor or any other supporter with you.

Alternatively make a statement through a third party such as a solicitor, friend or police (press) officer

If you do not respond personally they will still expect a comment or statement. It is possible to issue this through numerous sources such as those above. Two sample statements are shown below which you can amend and personalise.

Contact a support organisation where you may be able to be put in contact with people who can offer help having experienced media attention themselves.

People who have already been through similar bereavement will be able to offer support and also give an insight into what to expect from the media.

Try not to over-react to media coverage of the tragedy. If necessary avoid watching television, listening to the radio or reading newspapers.

It is a natural reaction to be unhappy about the way the media cover a story and many people claim they have been misquoted. One way of dealing with this is to avoid 'seeing' the coverage entirely. If others try to draw your attention to it, simply inform them that you do not wish to see or hear it and ask them to respect your wishes.

Be aware that the initial interest may be followed by renewed coverage of the inquest or investigation.

The immediate aftermath of the tragedy will not be the only time media interest will be aroused. Even if you do not co-operate or speak to the media, they will cover the coroner's inquest. They may even approach you at the end of the inquest for further comments.

Two sample statements

Statement One:

The family of _____ are deeply shocked by his / her death.

_____ was a well respected member of the community and a loving husband/ wife / partner / father / mother / son / daughter.

You will understand that the loss of _____ has come as a tremendous shock to us all and we would ask you to respect our privacy at what is a very difficult time for us all.

Statement Two:

The family of _____ are deeply shocked by his/her death.

_____ was a well respected member of the community and a loving husband/ wife / partner / father / mother / son / daughter.

_____ was *(insert here any message you wish to add about the person, such as personal history or personal tribute)*

He / She will be sorely missed by all his / her family and many friends.

You will understand that the loss of _____ has come as a tremendous shock to us all and we would ask you to respect our privacy at what is a very difficult time for us all.

Under the present circumstances we feel unable to make any further comments, issue any further statements or undertake any media interviews.