

Rebuild General Practice

*Media training
pack*

RebuildGP.co.uk



@rebuildgp



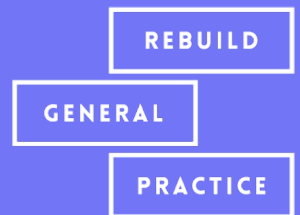
GPDF Listening
Supporting
Influencing

 **BMA**

Contents

01	Types of broadcast interview	3
02	Getting your message across	6
03	Dos and don'ts	10
04	Logistics	14
05	Crisis management	17
06	Conclusion	20

Types of broadcast interview



PRE-RECORDED

- The journalist wants you to deliver a tight clip (soundbite), to fit into their package. A package is a pre-recorded report using reporter voice-over, contributor clips and video footage or radio wild track.
- Yours is likely to be one of two or three clips from different contributors, taking opposite views in an argument or illustrating different points on the same subject matter.
- An ideal soundbite is 10-15 seconds. Anything longer than that and it's likely it will get clipped and you might be left feeling your comment has been taken out of context.
- Worse still, if nothing you've said can be clipped to 15 seconds, you might be dropped in favour of another contributor.
- Each answer could be 30-45 seconds in total (including the ABCD technique).
- The only exception to this is if you've been told you are doing a 'sit-down interview', in which case you would be well-briefed in advance, there would usually be 2 camera operators - one filming you and one filming the journalist - and the entire interview, or a significant chunk, would be run 'as-live'.



REBUILD

GENERAL

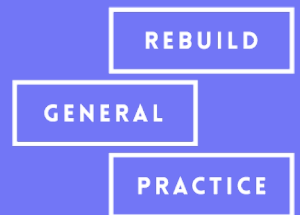
PRACTICE

LIVE

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Getting your message across



Getting your message across

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Ensure you have the **key messages** you want to get across memorised for TV interviews/printed out and in front of you for radio.
- Remember most presenters are not aiming to catch you out, so **try not to be nervous**. Tell yourself that you are just having a chat with one person, the presenter.
- **Speak human!** Think of the interview as a conversation with a friend or relative who works in a totally different field. Avoid ALL acronyms and jargon apart from the few that patients definitely understand eg NHS and GP.
- Use the **ABCD technique**, which will help you answer interviewer's questions with confidence (see next slide).

ABCD technique

ACKNOWLEDGE



Acknowledge that you've understood the question.

Examples

- *That's a great question. What we know right now is...*
- *That's an interesting suggestion.*
- *I understand why you're asking me that but...*

BRIDGE



Bridge by using a phrase to turn towards what you want to talk about.

Examples

Well, let's look at what we do know...

What I think patients are desperate to know is...

Actually, that relates to the bigger issue of...

What's key here is...

I'm sure you wouldn't expect me to speak on her behalf but what I can tell you is...

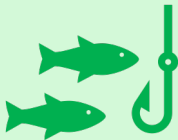
ABCD technique

CONTROL



This is the easy bit, where you get across your key messages.

DANGLE



Try to round off your answer by introducing the next key message, so that the journalist's follow-up question focuses on what you want to talk about.

Examples

YOU: ...so we hope the Government is in listening mode or it'll have a devastating knock-on effect on patients. And that's why we're urging them to allocate one thousand new training places each year for the next six years.

PRESENTER: Well, I wanted to ask you about extra training places because I understand there have been no extra places this year, despite the added pressure on the system from the pandemic..?

You are now in control of the interview. The D element of this technique does rely on the journalist listening to your answers and reacting, rather than reading out a list of prepared questions and that doesn't always happen (!) but you should be successful in using A,B,C in every single interview you give and adding in D in many too.

Dos and don'ts



Top 5 dos

CHECK YOURSELF IN THE CAMERA BEFORE STARTING: Make sure you're happy with the way you look in the shot and make any necessary last-minute adjustments to your hair/tie etc, if needed.

STAY CALM: It's only telly! You deal with life and death and angry patients. You've got this! And if you don't understand a question, say so! It probably means the audience don't either and it's because the interviewer has made a hash of it.

STAY FOCUSED: And keep going if anything else is going on in the background (a regular occurrence on e.g. College Green, opposite Parliament). During a live, only ever stop mid-interview if you are in danger and have to move. During a pre-recorded interview, you can stop and start if you fluff an answer or don't understand a question, but try to keep this to a minimum.

RELAY YOUR MESSAGE: This is your chance to get your message across, so remember the ABCD technique and say what you want to say.

THINK OF THE INTERVIEW LIKE A CHAT: You're more likely to speak naturally and the audience is more likely to engage with what you're saying.



Top 5 don'ts

DO NOT TALK IN JARGON: Large swathes of the audience won't understand the term 'primary care', let alone CCG, GPDF etc.

DO NOT GIVE LONG ANSWERS: You'll get interrupted and risk sounding as though you're not in control of the interview.

DO NOT SAY THE PRESENTER'S NAME AT THE START OF EVERY ANSWER: However, it's good to say it once at the beginning

DO NOT START EVERY ANSWER WITH THE WORD 'SO': More and more people do it and it sounds very strange!

DO NOT MOVE AROUND ON CAMERA: Stay still and focus on your interviewer in a pre-recorded interview and look straight into camera for a live down-the-line interview.

If you only remember one thing... make it this!



Talk to the journalist in advance of your interview, ideally when they book you.

- They will almost certainly want to chat through areas of questioning, to get a rough idea of your angle and plan who else they need to include in their piece/article.
- Having this chat enables you to plan your answers to some degree and allows you to check whether the interview is live or pre-recorded, on TV or radio, etc.
- It's amazing how many interviewees don't do it. Why fly blind when you don't have to!?
- You should assume everything you say could be used on-air/in an article, unless you tell the journalist you are speaking off the record.

Logistics



Camera angles and where to look

- For all types of TV interview, the camera crew will tell you exactly where they want you to stand, so don't worry about this.
- In terms of where to look, if you are being interviewed face-to-face, i.e. the journalist is with you at the interview point, they will ask you to **look at them**, NOT the camera.
 - This applies whether the interview is being recorded for play-out later or whether the interview is being carried live on, for example, BBC News
- **BUT** if you are doing a live interview and the presenter is in a remote studio, you will need to **look straight at the camera**, i.e. down the barrel of the lens.
 - This would apply, for example, if you are outside your GP practice in Skipton doing a live interview with the presenter of Look North who is in their Leeds studio.
 - In this kind of scenario, Look North would probably send a sat truck or van with an engineer, who could explain this and tell you where to look and stand, but, in case it's a last-minute rush, it's always good to know what to do.

IN PERSON =
LOOK AT
INTERVIEWER



REMOTE =
LOOK STRAIGHT
AT CAMERA



Before you start your interview...

- As long as there is time, they'll want a **chat about the story** and to get a rough idea of what you're going to say, so that they can tailor their questions. You might have already had this conversation over the phone but there's always the chance for more small talk while the camera operator sets up, so use this to pump the journalist further about what they plan to ask you!
- The camera operator will **put a mic on you and frame their shot**. Once they've made last minute checks, such as a white balance for their camera (don't be alarmed if they put a sheet of paper close to your face – that's what they're doing!), they'll tell the journalist they're all set or they might say 'Recording'.
- The journalist will now ask you a couple of questions to check the volume of your voice on the recording and to get any details about the **spelling of your name/title on-tape**, to ensure you are introduced correctly or given the correct on-screen Aston/lower-third.
 - The classic question here is "Can I get your name and job title for the tape?".
 - Please don't forget to add the campaign name here, e.g., Dr Jane Brown, GP Partner in Rochdale and I'm speaking today on behalf of the Rebuild General Practice campaign.

QUICK CHAT



TECH CHECKS



NAME/TITLE CHECK



Crisis management



What to do if things go wrong

If there's a problem with your earpiece or the line breaks up and you can't hear the question properly:

You have two options here. Firstly, you could be honest and ask the presenter to repeat the question because the line broke up — that's absolutely fine to do. Or secondly, you could be brave and go straight in with the **B** of **ABCD** by saying 'I couldn't hear the question very well because the line broke up but what I've come on to tell your listeners today is...' Either approach is fine. What you mustn't do is try to answer a question you haven't heard without referring to the technical problem. You might get totally the wrong end of the stick and it could sound very strange!

If the interviewer asks you a factual question and you don't know the answer:

It's almost always best to be honest and say you don't know. For example, 'I'm sorry, I don't have that statistic in front of me but what I can tell you is....'. Remember your ABCD technique and you can get out of almost anything..

What to do if things go wrong

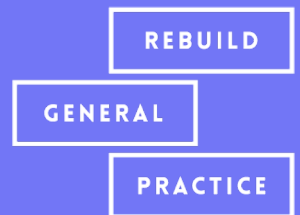
If the presenter keeps interrupting and won't let you get your message across:

Don't get angry! It can be frustrating but it won't endear you to your audience if you lose your rag. The best approach often is to let the presenter finish their interruption and then continue what you were saying before they chipped in. And if they really won't stop, you can say something like 'I will answer your next question, but are you going to let me have a go at answering this one first?' That kind of comment usually shames most interviewers into shutting up for a bit.

If you're doing a radio interview and you can hear yourself back on delay in your headphones:

This is a classic problem you can almost always resolve before you go live. Basically, the studio manager at the other end has forgotten to press a button and there is a simple fix. Don't endure it for a whole interview – it's extremely off-putting and you're likely to sound hesitant and unsure of what you're saying if you struggle on. So, always ensure you have a chat with the producer down the line, before you go live. If this happens when you're sitting next to a presenter in a studio, you don't usually even need to wear headphones, so it won't be an issue.

Conclusion



Finally, remember...

- The interviewer isn't usually trying to catch you out! There's no need to be nervous.
- Clarity of language is everything. Lose the jargon and the acronyms or you'll lose your audience.
- Always assume the mic is on!
- Have fun! When you get good at media interviews, it's an exhilarating feeling!

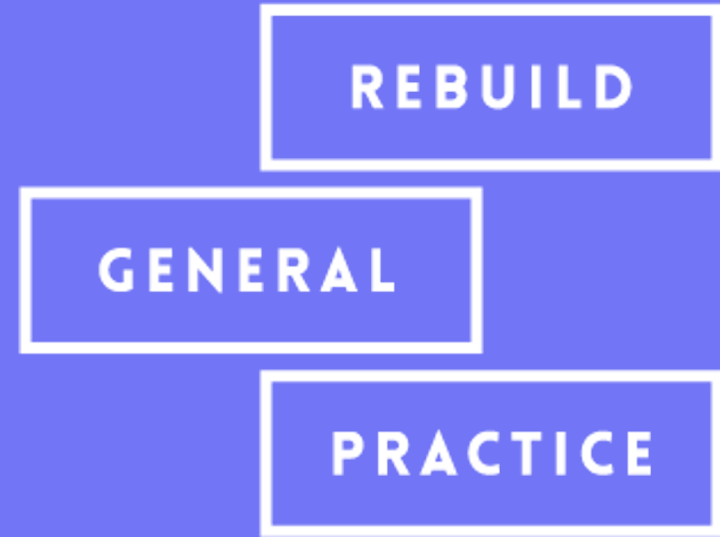


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