

Use these tips to help promote your *Communities Talk* event and build relationships with local and independent media outlets.

1. DO YOUR RESEARCH

- Identify reporters who cover community issues, education, health, or youth topics in your area.
- Check local newspapers, radio stations, and TV news websites for contact information.
- Don't forget community blogs, newsletters, and college media outlets—these contacts could become your best communication channels.

2. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS EARLY

- Reach out before your event with a short, friendly email introducing yourself and the event.
- Offer to be a source for future stories on youth substance use prevention (so that you are offering something in return) and stay in touch year-round by sharing updates on prevention efforts and local resources.
- Follow journalists on social media and engage with their posts. This will keep your name familiar to them.

3. MAKE COVERAGE EASY

- Share a press release or media advisory with your contacts that has the key event details: who, what, when, where, and why.
- Include quotes from speakers or youth participants if possible; most reporters will want this context to make their reporting more interesting.
- Offer visuals—photos, graphics, video clips of your previous events, or even content from [SAMHSA's YouTube channel](#)—and let them know if interviews will be available.

4. HIGHLIGHT LIVED EXPERIENCE

- Journalists are drawn to real stories. If your event includes youth or community members sharing personal experiences, mention that in your outreach.
- Be clear about any privacy or consent considerations.

5. ENGAGE INDEPENDENT MEDIA

- Many journalists now work outside traditional outlets. Platforms like Bluesky, Substack, and YouTube are home to reporters covering social issues with a community lens.
- These outlets may be more open to collaboration and storytelling that centers lived experience.

6. FOLLOW UP

- After your event, send a thank-you note to any journalists who attended and offer to share photos or a recap.
- If no one covered it, consider submitting a short op-ed or community story to a local outlet.

RELATED SAMHSA RESOURCES:

[National Prevention Week: Tips for Working with the Media](#)

[National Prevention Week: Tips for Writing an Op-ed](#)