

Working with the MEDIA

Using the media is a very effective way to spread awareness about SADS. Before any kind of mass media campaign is initiated, please keep the following in mind:

1. The media love to cover local community events and activities. Each year we encourage volunteers to take advantage of that fact. The media can be a tremendous ally. Please utilize them by sharing your story, and any events you plan, to spread awareness in your area about the long QT syndrome.
2. Always call the SADS Office before contacting the media on your own. That way, we can send them a media packet, set up an interview with a physician and review the article for accuracy prior to its publication.
3. The best results are achieved when more than one technique is used and when several techniques support each other. For example, a speaker at a special event should be publicized through news releases and photographs and promoted in advance through posters, flyers, and articles in newsletters. Overall, the most successful strategy is to identify the public to be reached and to choose one or more appropriate and effective techniques for getting your message across to them.

Remember, in all your discussion, articles and presentations, to make these points:

- Children and young adults who die from SADS usually appear healthy
- Warning Signs: family history of unexpected, unexplained sudden death; fainting or seizure during exercise, excitement or startle; consistent or unusual chest &/or shortness of breath during exercise
- These conditions absolutely treatable and treatment saves lives
- Mention the SADS Foundation contact information. Hotline 800 STOP SAD and www.StopSADS.org

Steps to Contact the Press:

- ♥ **Identify who would like to hear your story** *perhaps a reporter who is interested in children and health issues.*
 - Research the publication/station before you contact them. Have background knowledge of what reporters cover and the style of the publication.
 - Contact everyone you think might be interested. Contact local and national newspapers, magazines, online publications, network and cable television, radio. No publication is too large or too small.
- ♥ **Send a media kit and/or a press release** to that reporter. *SADS is happy to provide the media kit and general pre-written press releases.*
 - Get a media kit to the reporter before you talk with them. Media kits provide background information and resource materials that provide history, accomplishments, statistics, events, recent news releases, contact information and other answers to frequently asked questions.
- ♥ **Tell them your story.** *You can write, call, email or fax reporters and tell them how SADS has affected you.*
 - Talk to the editor/reporter about how your story would make an impact on the community. Suggest different points of interest for different story angles. **Use the SADS Foundation's three warning signs in every story.**
 - Give them the SADS Foundation toll-free number and web site address *so we can respond to any questions and send out applicable information*
 - Be honest and prepared. Have accurate facts and as much information as possible. Refer the reporter to the SADS Foundation if you are unsure of anything.

Supporting Families. Saving Lives

- Look for a variety of sources to share your story with. Don't give up. You may even meet with a reporter for lunch to tell him/her your story and explain about the SADS Foundation.
- Reporters are usually under deadlines and need information quickly. Be available and ready if they contact you, as they don't have time to wait for you to return their messages.

- ♥ **Follow-up with a call** to the reporter within 3 - 5 days.
 - Keep reporters informed of events and story ideas on an ongoing basis (support group get-togethers, youth activities, fund raising events, conferences, meeting, speakers, etc.)
- ♥ **Send a thank you letter** to the reporter.
- ♥ **Send a copy of the story to the SADS Foundation**, noting the date, source and media contact.

Helpful Ideas: Print Media

1. FEATURE ARTICLES

Feature articles spotlight an individual or family with SADS. Share your story and facts about SADS with the media.

2. SPORTS-ORIENTED ARTICLES

If your story involves death or fainting during athletics, share your story with a sports reporter.

4. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- Write a letter responding to a previously published story that interested you and mention SADS
- Write a letter of thanks about a recent article and reiterate some of the points made.
- Express thanks to the general public for supporting a fundraising event or campaign or some other SADS sponsored activity.

Helpful Ideas: Television and Radio

- Contact the stations you enjoy and also stations that are interested in health stories.
- Post Awareness Month events on website calendars and call the station with information. Contact them before planned events and invite them to attend. Make SADS families and doctors available to be interviewed at the event. *We can help you with spokespeople for the media—please contact us!*
- Call the medical reporter and see if he/she would like to do a story on SADS and share your story.

Other Ideas

- ★ **Local television stations often have “Community News” segments.** This is a great time and place to announce your events and activities for SADS Awareness Month
- ★ **Television and newspaper medical reporters** cover stories about individuals and families with health conditions and/or who have lost a loved one from that health condition. Contact and share your story with them, offering information about SADS. Be sure they list the SADS Foundation's toll free phone number and web site on TV!
- ★ **University newspapers** will also highlight community events.
- ★ **Papers at your workplace or your child's school** would also be a great place for an article.

Remember to tell SADS how it went. Let us know if the media are telling your story and send us a copy of any story or picture.

The staff at the SADS Foundation is available to you as a resource. If you need materials or information, please contact the SADS Foundation at 1-800-STOP SAD (1-800-786-7723) or via e-mail at sads@StopSADS.org. You may also visit the SADS Foundation at www.StopSADS.org