### PRACTICING AN INTERVIEW (WM5E)

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#### Purpose
This exercise contributes to the module learning objectives by providing an opportunity for participants to practice interviewing with the media.

#### Time Required
- Varies

#### Activity Description
This activity corresponds with the Art of the Interview PowerPoint presentation and the Writing a Press Release activity.

After reviewing the press releases that were written by the participants, the facilitator will pose as a journalist and ask each participant 1-2 interview questions related to his/her press release. The participant will not know the question ahead of time. One of the challenges for the participants is to stick to their main message; the “journalist” may ask a question that diverts attention from the topic, or that is designed to elicit a controversial response. The participants must respond to the question while at the same time sticking to their main message about their research.

*(Optional Activity)* The interview can be video recorded. Share the recorded interviews with participants via email or post online (such as YouTube). After watching the videos, each participant should send 1-2 paragraphs of feedback to the facilitator via email. The facilitator can then use this feedback as a general group discussion when time allows.

Many participants have never seen themselves on film in a professional setting. They may not be familiar with the type of gestures and body movements they tend to make while they speak. This exercise will help them see where they may need improvement in interviewing and where they did well. It will help build their confidence to interview with the media. Participants tend to learn from evaluating the content of the interview as well as their physical and oral delivery.
Pick two or three interviews to discuss with the larger group. Identify areas that need improvement and elements that are well-done where the participant applied the tips and strategies highlighted in the PowerPoint presentation. After watching the videos, the group can provide feedback to the participant. The group can critique the interviewee by probing the group with some of the following questions. As the facilitator, ensure the conversation does not become too negative or critical of one individual; prepare in advance by identifying positive feedback about each interview that you will critique, as well as areas for improvement.

1. Was the interview clear?
2. Did the participant make sense?
3. What was the body language?
4. How did the participant react to questions that were challenging?
5. Did the interviewee seem comfortable or nervous?
6. Did the interviewee go on and on about nothing?

**Key Learning Concept(s)**

- Responding to questions without advance preparation.
- Using simple, clear, and concise language.
- Observing and critiquing themselves on film.
- Sticking to the message.

**Materials Needed**

- Optional - video recorder (flip-cam, digital camera, or smart phone)

**Associated Exercises**

- Writing a Press Release (WM3A)

**Required Preparation**

- Effective Interviewing Techniques (WM4L)