

## Preparing for Potential Media Interviews

Participating in an interview with a member of the media is a wonderful way to share the story of the life of a precious child as well as spread awareness of SUDC. Here are some simple steps to help you prepare and ensure the best coverage possible!

- ★ **Reach out to the SUDC Foundation.** *If you plan to do any media interviews, please consider contacting the SUDC Foundation at [info@sudc.org](mailto:info@sudc.org). Our staff will be able to help you prepare you in a way that you feel comfortable and ensure the coverage includes accurate and current information on SUDC.*
- ★ **Share the SUDC Foundation's [media kit](#):** This provides an overview of SUDC and the SUDC Foundation and can be given to any members of the media.
- ★ **Decide on your key points:** What is the main goal of your interview? What do you want to make sure the interviewer includes? Think of the three most important take-always and focus on them. Here are our top three:
  - The story of a precious child
  - SUDC is a public health problem. It is the 5<sup>th</sup> leading category of death among toddlers (kids 1-4 years old).
  - We need research to understand and prevent SUDC.
- ★ **Rehearse.** Even though speaking about an SUDC child may be second nature to you, you should practice telling the story of his or her life and/or his or her death in a concise and compelling way. This will help you feel comfortable while being interviewed and ensure you communicate the way you want to. Quotes and sound bites tend to be short, so make every word count! When you practice, also be sure to:
  - **Use clear language.** Avoid using terminology that will need to be explained to the person interviewing you.
  - **Pause.** If you know you are about to say something particularly poignant or something you want to emphasize, pause before and after you say it. It will help it stand out more to the person interviewing you!

- **Prepare some pivot phrases.** If the interviewer seems to veer off topic or talk about something that makes you uncomfortable, use pivot phrases to bring the discussion back to where you want it to be. Some examples of pivot phrases are:

“The most important thing you need to know is...”

“Here’s what I really want to make clear...”

“The critical point here is...”

- ★ **Familiarize yourself with some key facts on SUDC.** Refer back to [Step 2](#) and [Step 3](#) of your Ambassador Training. Review what you need to help make you feel comfortable, but please don’t increase your anxiety by feeling like you have to be an expert on SUDC!
- ★ **Refer them to the SUDC Foundation for follow-up to your interview.** We know the story of your loved one is the foundation of your interview, but we want to be able to support you! The SUDC Foundation can answer any difficult questions about SUDC for you as well as provide information on SUDC or the opportunity for the interviewer to speak to someone who can offer a medical or scientific perspective.
- ★ **Relax!** You are going to do a great job! Thank you!
- ★ **Looking for more help?** Contact us at 800-620-SUDC or [info@sudc.org](mailto:info@sudc.org)

## Avoiding Media Interview Pitfalls

- ★ **If you don’t know something, that’s ok!** Never lie and never make anything up. It is always better to tell the interviewer that you don’t know something than to risk giving inaccurate information. The SUDC Foundation would be more than happy to help fill in any blanks you may have.
- ★ **If you don’t want to talk about something, that’s ok too.** It’s ok to show emotion when being interviewed, but if you are not comfortable doing so, it’s ok to stop the interview or change the subject. If it is too painful to talk about any particular aspect of your loved one’s death, don’t do it. Before your interview, try to decide what you are comfortable discussing. Think about the words and phrasing you want to use that will help you communicate that during the interview or consider letting the interviewer know ahead of time where your boundaries are. Taking care of yourself and respecting your limits while you grieve has to be your priority, and your interviewer will understand.
- ★ **Avoid making generalized, negative comments.** Unfortunately, some of us who have lost a loved one to SUDC may feel we were not treated appropriately perhaps by the police officers, emergency personnel, doctors or medical examiners/coroners or any other professional we have encountered. While we know how important it is to honor your feelings and experiences, please remember we need the support of members from all of those professions to help advance the

cause of SUDC so that no one has to experience what you have. Please avoid making harsh or negative comments towards a particular profession.

- ★ **Sometimes the media gets it wrong!** You can say everything exactly correct in your interview, and the story may not turn out the way you want or have inaccurate information in it. Everyone makes mistakes! For example, our experience shows that members of the media often make the mistake of referring to SUDC as a cause of death, rather than a category. Sometimes they make mistakes on the details on the child's story. The SUDC Foundation will provide immediate follow-up to the interviewer to get any mistakes corrected.