

Alzheimer's Disease International

Engaging with the media

2023



**Alzheimer's Disease
International**

The global voice on dementia

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About this toolkit

Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia are some of the most serious public health challenges to exist globally, **affecting over 55 million people worldwide, a number expected to rise to 139 million by 2050.**

In addition to those living with the condition, dementia directly affects families, carers and the wider society. Raising awareness about dementia and advocating for support for those living with the condition is crucial to improve diagnosis, care and research into the condition and ultimately work towards improving the lives of those living with dementia and their families.

World Alzheimer's Month, held every September, is a global campaign dedicated to raising awareness and challenging the stigma surrounding dementia. This month-long campaign serves as a platform for organisations and individuals to hold events, such as memory works, engage with the campaign on social media and enlist traditional media outlets and amplify the campaign messages.

Engaging effectively with the media is important for increasing support for your World Alzheimer's Month campaign and promoting a better understanding of dementia. This guide aims to provide a comprehensive overview of working with the media, focusing on using it effectively for the World Alzheimer's Month campaign.

This guide explores various aspects of media engagement, including understanding the media landscape, identifying your target audience, crafting a message and developing a media strategy tailored to your campaign goals. Additionally, this guide will offer practical advice on writing press releases, building relationships with journalists, using social media effectively, preparing for interviews and measuring the success of your media efforts.

By using the strategies and techniques outlined in this guide, you will be better equipped to utilise the media to raise awareness, reduce stigma and ultimately work towards improving the lives of those affected by dementia during World Alzheimer's Month. While this toolkit is designed in the context of World Alzheimer's Month, the topics and topics outlined in the documents are useful for your engagement with the media throughout the entire year.

About

Alzheimer's Disease International

Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) is the international federation of 105 dementia and Alzheimer associations from around the world and is in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO). ADI's vision is **prevention, care and inclusion today, and cure tomorrow.**

ADI believes that the key to winning the fight against dementia lies in a unique combination of global solutions and local knowledge. As such, ADI works locally by empowering Alzheimer and dementia associations to promote and offer care and support for people with dementia and their care partners, while working globally to focus attention on dementia and campaigning for policy change from governments.

A list of ADI members, as well as the ADI team, can be found [on our website](#).



ADI advocates for the implementation of the **WHO Global Plan of Action on the public health response to dementia 2017-2025**, also known as the WHO Global Action Plan on dementia, universally adopted by WHO Member States in May 2017. The plan committed all 194 Member States of the WHO to seven action areas: dementia as a public health priority; dementia awareness; risk reduction; diagnosis, treatment and care; support for carers; information systems for dementia and dementia research and innovation. Each action area has targets which every Member State of the WHO should work towards

Since its launch in 2017, ADI has published a series of progress reports called **From Plan to Impact** which document the progress of Member States towards achieving the targets set out in the plan.

ADI also engages in awareness raising and the destigmatisation of Alzheimer's disease and dementia through various activities but most notably through the World Alzheimer's Month campaign.

Media

Understanding the landscape

To successfully utilise the media for World Alzheimer's Month, it is helpful to understand the various channels through which you can communicate your messages.

Each type of media has its strengths, weaknesses, and audiences. By understanding these nuances, it can help you make informed decisions about the most effective channels for sharing your message as widely and as effectively as possible.



Newspapers and Print Media

Print media, including newspapers and magazines, is considered a trusted source of news and information. Although print readership has declined in recent years due to the rise of digital media, newspapers and magazines still play a significant role in shaping public opinion and influencing decision-makers.

Strengths:

- Print media is often perceived as more credible than other media sources.
- Newspapers and magazines can provide more in-depth analysis and coverage compared to broadcast media
- Local and specialised publications can help you reach different or specialised audiences such as Health Care Practitioners or policymakers

Weaknesses:

- Newspaper and magazine readership is declining, with some of their audience transitioning to other forms of media, such as digital and online platforms
- Due to its popularity, coverage can be competitive
- It's physical print format means deadlines can be tight
- Once a story has been submitted it can be difficult to alter



Online news outlets and blogs

The rise of the internet has led to a dramatic increase in new and innovative news outlets and blogs, paving the way for special interest news sites that would not have been financially viable in print format. Some print and broadcast media also have launched their own online versions of their news formats. These platforms offer a dynamic and interactive way to reach your target audience, making them a potentially useful platform to share World Alzheimer's Month messages.

Strengths:

- Online news outlets and blogs can cover a wide range of topics and formats, often in special or niche interests
- Online content can be easily shared on social media, maximising its reach and impact
- Digital platforms can publish and update content quickly

Weaknesses:

- Some online sources may be perceived as less credible than traditional media
- The sheer volume of online news sites and online content can make it challenging to stand out and capture attention



Podcasts

Podcasts have experienced significant growth in recent years, becoming a popular medium for long-form analysis of issues. Often thematic, they provide a unique opportunity to reach a highly engaged and loyal audience interested in your topic.

Strengths:

- Podcast listeners are typically highly engaged and receptive to the content they consume
- Podcasts often allow for in-depth discussions, providing the opportunity to delve deeper into the complexities of Alzheimer's disease and dementia as well as your key World Alzheimer's Month messages

Weaknesses:

- With the growing number of podcasts available, it can be challenging for new listeners to discover your content
- The length of podcasts means they often require significant preparation time and investment

Target audiences

Understanding who you want to reach

Before creating your message and developing your media strategy, it is important to identify your target audience(s). Your target audience is simply the people you want to reach and influence with your message. A clear understanding of your target audience will help you tailor your message and choose the most appropriate media channels for your campaign.



Audiences

How to define them

Your audience is the group of people most directly affected by your message or the individuals who have the power to make decisions or take action.

For example, in a risk reduction campaign you may wish to target people who are overweight, smoking or excessively drive alcohol to encourage them to adopt a healthier lifestyle and potentially reduce or delay their chances of developing dementia.

It is important to remember that there may be other audiences who may read, hear or see your message that could play a supporting role in spreading awareness. This could be politicians and policy makers, Health care practitioners, family or friends of concerned individuals or the general public.



Audiences

Choosing the right media

Media habits refer to the ways in which your target audience engages with media channels. Understanding these habits can help you find the best media platforms for your campaign. Some questions to consider when researching your audience's media consumption habits include:

- What media platforms do they prefer (e.g., print, broadcast, digital, social media)?
- What specific outlets, channels, or publications do they trust and engage with?
- How frequently do they consume media, and at what times of day?
- Do they prefer long-form content, such as articles and podcasts?



Audiences

Tailoring your message

Once you have an understanding of your target audience, you can tailor messages which will resonate with each of your target audiences.

For example, if your primary audience encouraging concerned individuals to see diagnosis, you may wish to focus on the some of the warning signs of dementia and where to seek help. On the other hand, if your audience are health care professionals, you may wish to highlight the importance of a referral to an Alzheimer's or dementia association following a diagnosis.

Writing your message

Helping audiences to understand

Once you have identified your target audience and gained an understanding of their media consumption habits, the next step is to craft an effective message for your World Alzheimer's Month campaign. Your message should be clear, concise and resonate with your target audience.

- **Define your core message.** Start by defining the central idea or theme of your campaign. Your core message should be simple, focused, and easily understood by your target audience. For World Alzheimer's Month, your core messaging might centre around risk reduction, post-diagnosis support, diagnosis or seek to address stigma or discrimination.
- **Make it relevant and relatable.** Your message should resonate with your target audience. Use data, intertwined with those with lived experience of those living with dementia and carers to ensure the stories are relatable and connect with your audiences on an emotional level.
- **Be clear and concise.** Clarity is essential when crafting your message. Use simple, straightforward language and avoid jargon or technical terms that may confuse or alienate your audience. Keep your message concise by focusing on the most critical information and avoiding unnecessary details or tangents.
- **Include a clear call to action.** Your message should include a clear call to action, guiding your audience on what steps they can take to support your campaign or its goals. Ensure your call to action is specific, achievable and easy for your audience to follow.

By crafting a compelling, clear, and targeted message, you will be better prepared to capture the attention and interest of your audience during World Alzheimer's Month. A powerful message that resonates with your target audience will not only raise awareness but also inspire action and create a lasting impact.

Working with the media

Press releases

A press release is a written communication that provides information about a newsworthy event, announcement, or story related to your campaign. More simply it is communication written in the style of a news article that journalists can adapt, expand or rewrite to suit theirs or their media outlet's style or interest. This press release is typically sent to journalists and media outlets, aiming to generate interest and coverage in your campaign



Press releases

Tips for crafting a press release

- **Embargo:** Getting a press release in front of a journalist as early as possible helps to improve the chances of story being published. Journalists do not want old news and a media embargo allows journalists to prepare their stories in advance, while ensuring that the news is released simultaneously by all participating media outlets, maximising your media reach. It is important that you do not break embargo, as this could jeopardise your chances of media outlets publishing the story and could negatively affect your relationship with the journalist.
- **Headline:** Write a clear and compelling headline that captures the essence of your story. Keep the headline concise, informative, and focused on the most newsworthy aspect of your announcement.
- **Lead bullet points:** Include 3-4 short sentences as bullet points which summarise the key purpose of your press release and call to action.
- **First paragraph:** The first paragraph should summarise the most important information in your press release, including the who, what, when, where, and why of your story. This paragraph should provide enough context for journalists to understand the significance of your campaign.
- **Body:** The body of your press release should provide additional details and background information. Use quotes from key spokespersons, relevant statistics, and examples, to make your press release more engaging and credible.

- **Quotes:** Include quotes from those living with dementia and carers on their experiences and the need for better diagnosis and support. Journalists are always keen to hear the importance of the World Alzheimer's Month from the standpoint of those most affected.
- **Boilerplate:** Include a short paragraph at the end of your press release that provides information about your organisation, its mission, and any other relevant information.
- **Contact information:** Provide the contact information for your designated media spokesperson, including their name, title, phone number, and email address, so journalists can follow up with any questions or requests for interviews.



Press releases

Tips for success

- **Be timely:** Send your press releases and media advisories early to maximise their impact. For example, if your announcement is related to a specific date, such as World Alzheimer's Day, send your press release a few days or a week in advance to give journalists enough time to prepare their coverage.
- **Be selective:** Only send press releases and media advisories for genuinely newsworthy events and announcements. Overloading journalists with too many communications can reduce the likelihood of coverage.
- **Follow up:** After sending your press release or media advisory, follow up with key journalists and media outlets to ensure they have received it and gauge their interest in your story.
- **Build relationships:** Develop a rapport and mutual trust with journalists throughout the whole year, having a friendly journalist to your cause can maximise your media impact your impact at World Alzheimer's Month and all year round.

Interviewing

Preparation and techniques

Securing media coverage for your World Alzheimer's Month campaign often involves participating in interviews with journalists, radio hosts, or TV anchors. Being well-prepared and developing effective interview techniques can help you communicate your message clearly and effectively, ensuring a positive outcome.

- **Before the interview**, it's important to familiarise yourself with any key messages you would like to convey, these should align with your overall World Alzheimer's Month campaign goals and resonate with your target audience. It can be helpful to practice delivering these messages concisely and clearly before the interview to help prepare.
- **When preparing** it can be helpful to research the journalist or media outlet conducting the interview to understand their style, audience, and interests, and use this information to tailor your responses and examples to suit their specific format.
- **Try to anticipate** some of the questions that interviewer may ask and prepare responses accordingly, this can include general questions about your campaign and World Alzheimer's Month theme. It is rare to be faced with controversial and challenging questions when representing a charity, but it is important that you consider whether any difficult questions are likely to be asked and prepare regardless. It can also be helpful to rehearse your interview responses with someone who can provide feedback and help you refine your answers.
- **During the interview**, aim to deliver your key messages in a clear and concise manner, staying focused on the topic at hand. If the interviewer asks a question that does not directly relate to your key messages, use the bridging technique such as "While that's an interesting point, what's really important to remember is..." or "I'm not sure about that, but what I can tell you is..." to guide the conversation back to your main points. While easier said than done, try to remain calm and composed throughout the interview, even if the questions become challenging take a moment to collect your thoughts before responding. Don't forget, you are the expert in the room!

- **Your body language, facial expressions and tone of voice** can convey just as much information as your words. Be mindful of nonverbal communication, maintaining eye contact, sitting up straight, and using gestures and facial expressions that reinforce your message. Speak in a confident, clear, and controlled tone. Conclude the interview with a positive statement or call to action that reinforces your key messages and leaves a lasting impression on the audience. After the interview, thank the journalist for their time and provide any additional information or resources they may need to complete their story.
- **Do not forget that you are representing your association** at every moment you engage with a journalist, avoid saying anything to a journalist that you would not want to be published, this includes before and after the 'interview'. A journalist may publish an off the cuff comment which could negatively affect your campaign or associations reputation.

Media campaigns

Measuring success and impact

Evaluating the success and impact of your World Alzheimer's Month media campaign is important for understanding its effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. Measuring your reach and impact can also be a useful metric when reporting back to funders or donors to your World Alzheimer's Month campaign.

Before you start your campaign, set up tracking and monitoring tools for key words, such as your association name. Companies such as TalkWalker and Google provide free versions of their brand tracking tools which will send alerts to your email when a news article is published containing these key words. Review these alerts and record any relevant to the campaign.

It is useful to remember that media outlets, particularly those with an online presence, will sometimes syndicate their stories, meaning that other outlets will publish the same or similar story; thus, improving your reach and impact.

At the end of the campaign evaluate the data to determine what worked well and what didn't? What messages were picked up by the media and which weren't and important why? This analysis can help better inform your subsequent World Alzheimer's Month campaigns and general engagement with the media.



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