

# Media Tips for WAY Volunteers

These media tips are designed to help WAY volunteers to reach out to their local media to share their story and to help get the word out about WAY.

## Who to approach for media coverage

Think about the best local media to target. As well as local newspapers, try BBC and independent radio stations, community radio stations and local TV news channels. Check their websites for the editor or producer's contact details.

## Helpful information for an interview

### **What is WAY?**

It's a national organisation for people aged 50 or under who have lost their partner.

### **What does WAY do?**

Provides information, advice, peer-to-peer support and campaigns for and on behalf of widows and widowers who were bereaved when they were 50 or under.

### **How has WAY helped you?**

For example, WAY has been a lifeline and meeting up with like-minded people has helped you to rebuild your life.

### **How many members does WAY have?**

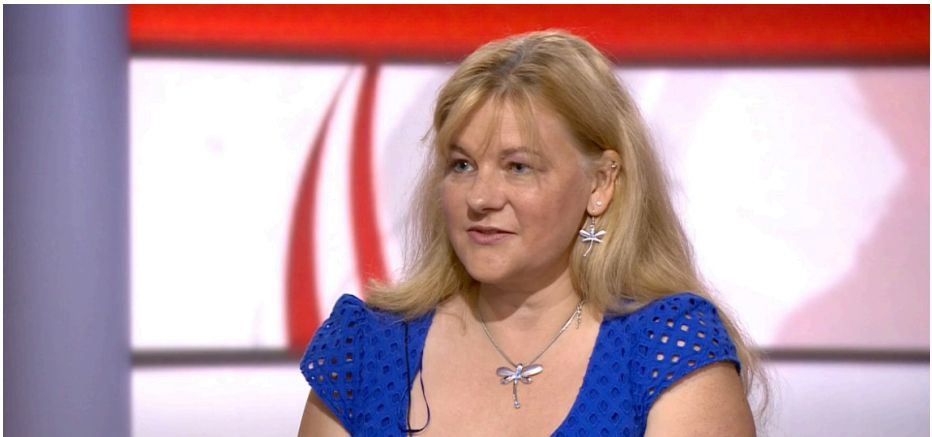
More than 3,500 members across the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and we are keen to spread the word about us so that we can help even more young widows and widowers to find out about our support. This number fluctuates, so best to check prior to any talk/interview.

### **How many local members there are?**

Please check and have this figure to hand.

### **How did WAY begin?**

After journalist Caroline Sarll discovered there was no support for her sister, whose husband died when she was 35. That was in 1997.



## **BEREAVEMENT PAYMENTS CLAIM**

Unmarried mother wins legal battle to claim payments

## Here are some top tips on how to handle a media interview

By Caroline Voaden  
(former WAY Chair, journalist and politician)

### These tips apply to print, radio, TV or online interviews

- 1. Be prepared.**  
Think about the key messages you want to get across in the interview before it starts and jot them down. You should have no more than three points. Put them on Post-it notes where you can see them at a glance during the interview – it's surprisingly easy to forget the obvious things if you're feeling a bit nervous! And your interview may be edited down to just a few soundbites.
- 2. Don't forget to say that WAY stands for Widowed and Young,** and do try and say that people can find us at **widowedandyoung.org.uk** at the end of the interview!
- 3. Remember to mention the basics** because people don't know who we are/what we do. The main points to cover:
  - WAY is a national support group with 3,500+ members
  - WAY is inclusive (men, women, married, unmarried, in same-sex partnerships, with/without kids). 'Life partner' is a good word to use because it's all encompassing
  - WAY offers everything from a cuppa/walk with one person to events with 100+ people
  - There's something for everyone including online chat, 24-hour helpline, 24-hour peer support etc.
  - There's also financial support to help people with events or joining fees through WAY's Memorial Fund.



- 4. Think about your own personal story.**  
How much are you prepared to talk about and where's your red line. You don't have to say anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- 5. Write your story down and say it out loud,** a few times. The more you hear your own voice saying it, the easier it will be to speak it out loud in an interview. During the interview, speak slowly and clearly and in short sentences, if possible.



- 6. Practice a couple of ways of diverting the interview** away from your story and back onto WAY – which you can use if you get uncomfortable, if you're being pushed too far, or even if the interviewer is just dwelling too much on your story and isn't showing enough interest in WAY!  
  
These can be lines like 'The details of my own story are not really what's important – the crucial thing is that everyone in WAY has a story, and every single story is harrowing. And that's what makes WAY the amazing organisation that it is.'
- 7. If going on TV or Instagram Live etc don't wear stripes** – they can be really distracting for the viewer! Strong colours look good on screen; avoid black if you can, it looks really harsh. Wear more make-up than you would ever normally wear if going on TV, because it really washes you out! Local TV stations (probably) won't have a make-up person.
- 8. Remember that talking to a journalist is just like having a conversation** – you forget there are other people watching or listening. Try to speak as naturally as possible. You'll be great!

or 'I think rather than my story, what's important to say is that we all have a story – every WAY member has been through their own personal catastrophe and that's what makes it work. We've been brought together because of something awful that happened to each of us – and there is a level of understanding, of people who just 'get it' that you just don't find anywhere else'.

You can find your own words – but the idea is to move the conversation gently away from you and back onto WAY and moving you back onto territory that is less personal.

Or you can just say 'I don't want to go there, can we talk about WAY?!'



**WAY contacts and follow-up**  
If you need any advice or help, please contact Vicky Anning at [media@widowedandyoung.org.uk](mailto:media@widowedandyoung.org.uk).

**Good luck and thank you** for helping us to reach out to other young widows and widowers who could benefit from our support. Please do let us know about any media coverage.

