

Preparing for a media interview: a guide for Autistic people

A helpful resource for radio, television, video calls and more

What to expect

Interviews can be live (happening in real time) or pre-recorded (recorded and edited before being shared). They might take place in person, on the phone, over Zoom or other platforms. This guide helps you feel more comfortable and in control before, during and after your interview.



Before the Interview

In most cases, the journalist you'll be speaking with has been provided with Aspect's 'Autism friendly interviewing' information sheet. This will help ensure they understand how you may be feeling and will respect any specific accommodations you may require.

Know what it's about

You should be told what the topic of the interview is, and what you'll be asked. Ask for a list of questions ahead of time.

Choose what works for you

You can request your preferred format – e.g. Zoom, phone call, in-person – and suggest a time that suits your routine. Most journalists will try and accommodate this.

Ask for information

You can ask for:

- Who will be in the interview (names, roles, photos)
- How long it will take
- What to wear
- What kind of microphone or camera will be used
- Whether a microphone pack is required (e.g. for TV)
- What kind of equipment will be used
- The lighting set up (brightness, direction etc.)
- What the process will be (step-by-step overview)
- A quiet, comfortable location (if in person)
- How to join online (Zoom link, steps, etc.)
- Whether a teleprompter is available and how to use it.

Our purpose a different brilliant®

Understanding, engaging
and celebrating the strengths,
interests and aspirations of people
on the autism spectrum.

Preparing for a media interview: a guide for Autistic people



Make adjustments if needed

Let the organiser know if you:

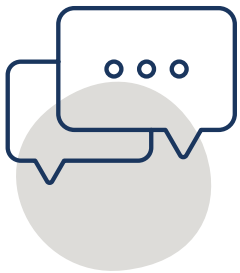
- Use communication devices, AAC, captions or need extra time to process
- Want to bring a support person to help or moderate
- Would like to help review language about autism
- Need sensory considerations (e.g. lights, sounds, breaks)
- Would like to script or rehearse your responses in advance
- Need to know when breaks will happen, and if food is available.

Understand your boundaries

- You don't have to say yes to media opportunities
- You can decline to answer any question and ask why it is being asked
- You can prepare your own phrases to say 'no' or ask to reword a question.

Check your permissions

- If you're speaking on behalf of an organisation, confirm what you're allowed to say
- Make sure personal details (e.g. pronouns, names, titles) are correct ahead of time
- Know how to handle corrections if inaccurate or wrong information is published
- Be aware that journalists may edit content without notice.



During the Interview

You're in control

It's okay to take your time, ask for questions to be repeated, or pause for a break.

You don't need to make eye contact

You can look wherever you're comfortable.

You can stim or fidget

Stimming helps many Autistic people feel calm and focused. Use tools that support you.

Stick to the plan

If questions were shared in advance, interviewers should generally follow those. If anything changes, you can say you'd prefer not to answer or request time to consider your response.

You don't have to answer everything

You can say "I'd rather not answer that" or "Can we move on?"

Know that what you say can be published

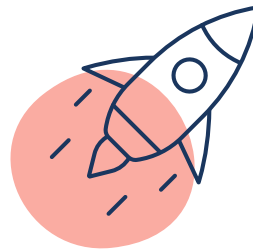
During a media interview, remember, anything you say to a journalist can be quoted and published.

Know your environment

- For radio: make sure you are somewhere quiet with good reception
- Know whether you are calling in or being called
- Understand that you may hear the radio while on hold and the next voice may be behind the live interview
- Have a simple introduction ready to start with if needed.

Use your support

Your support person can help you manage questions, especially if they become personal or outside your comfort zone.



After the Interview

Ask for follow-up

In some cases you can request:

- To review your quotes (or video/audio) before they are used
- A copy of the final piece (TV story, podcast, article)
- To confirm publication or air dates
- Contact details in case you have questions later.

Share feedback

If something helped you feel comfortable, let them know. It helps make media more inclusive.

Problem solving

If a mistake happens (e.g. incorrect pronoun use), ask how to have it corrected and discuss future prevention.



Quick tips

SITUATION	WHAT YOU CAN DO
TV/radio studio feels too busy	Ask for a quiet room or noise-cancelling headset
Unsure what to wear	Ask if there's a dress code or what's expected
You use AAC or don't speak	Let them know your preferred communication style
Interview is running long	Ask to take a break or finish up early
You're feeling overwhelmed	Ask to pause or reschedule if needed
Unsure how loud to speak	Ask for a sound check or volume guidance
Unsure how to say no	Prepare a few scripts such as "I'd prefer not to answer that" or "Can we rephrase that question?"



Need support?

Contact the person who arranged the interview. You can also talk with someone you trust (family, friend, support worker) to help you prepare.

Remember: your voice matters. Media interviews are an opportunity to share your story, your way.

Based on the idea of a different brilliant®, Aspect's approach:

- Respects difference and diversity
- Builds a person's skills based on their strengths, interests, aspirations and support needs
- Develops autism-friendly environments
- Supports others to understand and embrace autism and to develop respectful supportive interactions.