

Press Release for Nonprofits

Both Content and Format are Crucial

By Joanne Fritz, Nonprofits.About.com
(Introduction by Mary Joyce)

A press release is a news story that you are writing on behalf of your organization. When writing the press release, think of the place you would like to see it published (news site, newspaper, magazine) and think about the kinds of stories you see published there. Then write your story to fit that style. Most news organizations would not write a story about a press conference by the Executive Director of an public health nonprofit, but they might write a story about a public health crisis that a nonprofit is dealing with. When writing a press release, *imagine you are a journalist* trying to write an engaging new story about your issue.

Press releases also are not just for the press any more. They can be posted on your website for all to read and to help optimize your site for the search engines. Nonprofit press releases will vary by news outlet and country, but the standard format is usually similar to the example below.

Basic Elements of a Nonprofit Press Release

1. **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.**
(This can be put above or below the headline and can be on either side of page)
2. **Headline**
(Centered across top of organization's letterhead or special news release stationary)
3. **Organizational info:**
(Can go above the headline or below. Usually appears on the left side)
 - Name of Organization
 - Address
 - Phone Number
 - Website URL
4. **Contact information:**
 - Name (can be a person's name or a generic place such as "the Public Affairs Department")
 - Email address of person or department
 - Phone Number (include office phone and cell phone numbers)
5. **Place, day, date**
(Start the first line of release.)
6. **Body of release** (like the body of a newspaper article)
 - The 1st paragraph. Begin your press release with a two sentence paragraph that provides a quick overview of the news why it is important. It should read easily and make your news sound exciting to a general audience.
 - In the 2nd paragraph provide some background information on the program, event, or issue. This is a great place to bring in statistics or other hard evidence about your issue.
 - In the remaining paragraphs:

1. Give additional information about the issue,
 2. Include at least one quote from an expert or staff person commenting on the topic or a person actually affected by the issue, such as the "star" of your advocacy video,
 3. If applicable, state how readers of the article can take action, get involved, or gain more information on the issue.
7. **Brief description of your organization**
(at the bottom of the press release)
 8. **Repeat contact information**
(And/or offer to provide someone to interview.)
 9. **###**
(These marks are centered just below the content of the release and signal the end of the release.)

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Child Abuse Prevention Is Everyone's Job Free Brochure to Help the Public Identify the Signs of Child Abuse

NBPCA
2235 North Broadway
Brunswick, Rhode Island 42500
www.ncpca.org

Contact: Jennifer Hustings, Media Liaison
jhust@nbpca.org
(516) 333-0000 (office)
(516) 658-0000 (cell)

Brunswick, RI, Thursday, August 01, 2009-- Child abuse goes up during hard economic times. Job losses, foreclosures, and fear for the future put tremendous stress on families.

Unfortunately, those stresses are taken out on the weakest members of our human family...the children.

The NBPCA, a child-protection organization in North Brunswick, believes that it is the responsibility of all Americans to participate in child abuse prevention in their communities. They have recently produced a brochure of action anyone can take to help children who are in danger.

"Child abuse is a serious societal issue and one that all of us need to address. We can do that by supporting agencies that work on behalf of children, and by making sure that we know the signs of abuse and what to do about it," said Lisa Gordon, executive director of the North Brunswick Organization for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

The most common signs of child abuse are:

1. xxxxxx
2. xxxxxx
3. xxxxx
4. xxxxx
5. xxxxxx

The child abuse prevention tactics everyone should take:

1. xxxx
2. xxxxx
3. xxxxx
4. xxxxx
5. xxxxx

The brochure can be downloaded as a PDF file from: xxxxxxx. Multiple copies of the brochure can be ordered by phone, mail or online (pay only cost of postage) at: xxxxxxxxxxxx.

These are tough times. Help make them easier for a child at risk: report suspected child abuse and support those organizations in your community that put children first. Child abuse prevention is everyone's job.

About the North Brunswick Organization for the Prevention of Child Abuse

The NBPCA, founded in 1975, seeks to protect children in the greater North Brunswick area from abuse and neglect. It does this by.....([mission](#), programs, etc)

The Executive Director of NBPCA, Lisa Gordon, is available for interviews about how to recognize the warning signs of child abuse.

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Sample Press Release in Print

The following article, published on the web site of *The New York Times*, was likely based on a press release.

Stigma of H.I.V. Is a Barrier to Prenatal Care



By *DONALD G. McNEIL Jr.*

August 27, 2012

Fear of being stigmatized as an [AIDS](#) patient is still a major barrier to good medical care for pregnant young women in many countries, a new study and a literature review have found.

The [study](#), based on a survey of 1,777 women in rural Nyanza Province in Kenya, was published Wednesday in *PLoS Medicine*. Only 44 percent of mothers in the province delivered in clinics, and the study found that a major obstacle was that they feared H.I.V. tests.

That echoed the findings of a [review](#) of multiple studies in many countries published in July by the same author, Janet M. Turan, a professor of public health at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Women may know that treatment saves them and their babies but avoid testing anyway. Many fear being kicked out by their husbands if they are found to be infected. One woman said her neighbors would assume she was a prostitute.

The Kenyan government's own campaign to get women to visit clinics may have inadvertently backfired by implying that it was especially important for H.I.V.-infected mothers. About 84 percent of the province's women of childbearing age were not infected, the report said.

The worldwide review described all sorts of stigmatizing behavior. One Mexican woman, for example, described a doctor saying, "How can you even think of getting pregnant knowing you will kill your child because you're positive?" The doctor threatened not to see her again if she became pregnant, the woman said.