

WHEN Health Communication Ethical Guidelines for Health Communicators.¹

- a. *First, try to do no harm. Human rights and the public good are paramount.*
- b. *Get it right. Check your facts and your sources, even if deadlines are put at risk.*
- c. *Do not raise false hopes. Be especially careful when reporting on claims for 'miracle cures' or potential 'health scares'.*
- d. *Beware of vested interests. Ask yourself, 'Who benefits most from this story?'*
- e. *Reject personal inducements. Always make it clear if material is being published as a result of sponsorship.*
- f. *Never disclose the source of information imparted in confidence.*
- g. *Respect the privacy of the sick, the disabled and their families at all times.*
- h. *Be mindful of the consequences of your story. Remember that individuals who may be sick or disabled – especially children – have lives to live long after the media have lost interest.*
- i. *Never intrude on private grief. Respect the feelings of the bereaved, especially when dealing with disasters. Close-up photography or television images of victims or their families should be avoided wherever possible.*
- j. *If in doubt, leave it out.*

¹ First drafted in 1998 by the media ethics charity MediaWise, these guidelines were developed in consultation with health communicators, health correspondents and the International Federation of Journalists over two years. The final version was adopted by the WHO European Health Communications Network as guidance for good practice.