

**SAS Media Guidelines for Reporting on Sexuality Related Topics**

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**Introduction:** The Society of Australian Sexologists (SAS) Media Guidelines for Reporting on Sexuality and Diversity aim to provide media outlets with a framework for responsible, inclusive, and respectful reporting on topics related to sexuality. These guidelines emphasise the importance of placing stories in context, ensuring accuracy and balance, and using respectful language. Furthermore, they stress the principles that any sexual practice that is consensual and legal should not be stigmatised. When reporting on sexual violence, special care must be taken to consider the survivor's privacy and utilise survivor-focused language, avoiding victim blaming.

**1. Inclusivity and Respect:**

* Avoid Stigmatising Language: Use language that is non-discriminatory, respectful, and inclusive. Avoid derogatory terms or slurs that may perpetuate stereotypes or harm individuals.
* Use Preferred Terminology: Respect individuals' preferred language and self-identifications. When unsure, consult with individuals or organisations for guidance.
* Diverse Perspectives: Seek out diverse voices and perspectives within marginalised communities to provide a more representative and balanced view of the topic.

**2. Sensitivity and Responsibility:**

* Place Stories in Context: Provide context for stories to ensure accuracy and balance in reporting.
* Avoid Sensationalism: Do not sensationalise or exploit personal stories or experiences related to sexuality. Ensure that reporting focuses on education and understanding rather than shock value.
* Consider Privacy: Obtain informed consent before sharing personal stories or identifying information about individuals, especially in cases of sensitive situations.
* Mental Health Awareness: Be aware of the potential impact of your reporting on the mental health of individuals and the broader community.

**3. Provide Resources and Support:**

* Include Helplines: When discussing topics related to diverse sexuality and marginalised groups, provide contact information for relevant support organisations, such as mental health services and addiction support.
* Offer Resources: Include links to further information and resources to help readers/viewers better understand the issues being discussed.

**4. Avoid Harmful Stereotypes:**

* Challenge Stereotypes: Avoid perpetuating stereotypes about individuals based on their sexual practices, experiences, or other aspects of their identity.
* Intersectionality: Recognise and explore how issues related to sexuality intersect with other aspects of identity, such as race, ethnicity, age, and disability.

**5. Responsible Reporting on Sensitive Topics:**

* Use Respectful Language: Use language that is respectful and non-derogatory. Encourage readers to adopt the same approach in their discussions and interactions.
* Reporting on Sexual Violence: Consider the privacy of survivors and use survivor-focused language to avoid victim blaming.
* Content Warning: Use content advisories when discussing potentially distressing or sensitive topics, allowing viewers to make informed decisions regarding their engagement with the content.

**Conclusion:** By adhering to these SAS Media Guidelines for Reporting on Sexuality, media outlets can play a crucial role in fostering understanding, inclusivity, and safety in our society. Responsible reporting on these topics not only informs the public but also contributes to the destigmatisation of issues related to diverse sexuality and marginalised communities, promoting a more diverse and accepting society.

The Society of Australian Sexologists encourages all media professionals to use these guidelines as a resource in their reporting practices, with a clear understanding of the impact that responsible reporting can have on reducing stigma, supporting survivors, and creating a more inclusive and safe community.