



Media Training Guide

We're so excited and proud of you for deciding to engage in media training with FASD United. This guide will highlight some of the ways you can prepare, to hopefully feel more comfortable and ready for your appearance.

Photo & Video Aesthetics

- **Background:** To display a professional appearance, please utilize a background that is well-lit, clean, and relevant to the video subject matter. An artificial computer backdrop is not recommended, unless specifically requested.
 - **Examples:** a tidy office space (desk/bookshelf), tidy living space, background blur setting, or minimalist background
 - **Avoid:** unkempt space, background photos with text that are clearly readable, busy patterns, unsavory imagery

Tip: Relying solely on an overhead light is not recommended. In addition to uneven/unflattering lighting of the face, these lights are tonally unique (warm/cool) and therefore less consistent.

Tip: The background should not appear brighter than your face.

- **Examples:** face a window to utilize natural lighting, use a ring light for studio lighting, clean your camera or computer camera lens.
- **Avoid:** vulgar or distasteful décor and items, eye-drawing artwork, filming during sun's peak, accidentally showing personal information in frame.
- **Framing:** To ensure your face is seen, try to sit (approximately) 2-3 feet away from the camera and have it recording straight-on or with a *slight* tilt downwards. Position yourself in a way that adheres to the [rule of thirds](#) for the most aesthetic result. Ensure that no part of your head is out of frame and have a little bit of space visible above the top of your head.

Tip: If possible, have someone help you frame by sitting where you will be while you adjust the lens OR vice versa.

Tip: Record in the horizontal/landscape (widescreen) orientation, not the vertical/portrait orientation, unless specifically requested.

- **Avoid:** only seeing one's head with no neck, seeing one's entire torso or body, a dramatic tilt of the camera.
- **Recording:** To create a visually appealing piece of media, make sure your video is focused and steady, and that you are physically comfortable. Please stop and record again if you mispronounce a word, stumble over a word, miss a word, or have an unintentional/awkward pause.

Tip: You will almost always need to record more than once, it's okay to mess up, adjust what went poorly and try again! If you are preparing for a live session, review questions and get a general idea of what you may say.

- **Examples:** sit upright in comfortable chair, verify camera's focus is on the subject, make sure camera is on non-shaky surface (preferably tripod or desk).
- **Avoid:** having someone hold the camera, slouching, blurriness or shifting focus.

Participant Tips

- **Consistency:** FASD United is hope-based and positively inclined. In addition to being professional, we try to promote non-stigmatizing, accurate language to represent the strengths-based focus of FASD.
 - **Examples:** speak of strengths in addition to any mentioned challenges, read organization's mission and vision in preparation, don't deviate too much from script.
 - **Avoid:** harmful/blaming language about birth moms, those with FASDs, and pregnant people.
- **Personalization:** It's important to connect with the audience. When given a script or questions in advance, it can be easy to appear as if you are reading off one. In order to avoid this, please practice in the mirror or on computer camera before recording to nail down your timing, speed, and performance.

Tip: Remember, you are a human being and have your own manner of speaking, you don't need to remove yourself from the content; let the audience get to know you a bit. Don't worry about getting it "perfect" just try to come across as natural and confident, let some personality shine through!

- **Examples:** make eye contact with the camera, be mindful of your tone and adjust accordingly, re-record if you stumble or feel uncertain.
- **Avoid:** reading from script directly while recording, looking away from the camera, monotone or unenthusiastic vocals.

Guidance and Logistics

- **Participant Appearance:** Appearance of participants will vary depending on the context of the video. Generally, wear business casual attire when on camera. The media team may ask you to wear a theme-specific or branded shirt in unique contexts.

Tip: We recommend neat, clean hair that allows your face to be fully visible.

- **Examples:** collared shirts, short/long sleeve wear-to-work shirts, form-fitting.
- **Avoid:** loose collars, tank top or "spaghetti strap" shirts, deep V-necks, pajamas.
- **Environment Appearance:** The recording environment helps maintain our professionalism. Think of these as additions to the guidance for background set-up.

Tip: Try and keep your space quiet while you are recording. We realize this is not always feasible, especially when recording live. If an unexpected noise is heard (car horn, alarm, yell), please stop and record again. Avoid unintentional sounds, such as tapping fingers, moving in chair, or adjusting clothing.

We know you'll do amazing, let your passion illuminate the media. It's okay if things don't go according to plan, just try your best and be yourself. If you have any questions, please reach out to FASD United's Media and Communications Hub, Andy Kachor (kachor@fasdunited.org) and Casidee Gonzales (gonzales@fasdunited.org).