

Covering Mental Health: For the Media

The young advocates connected to Jack.org are smart, driven, and highly-trained. They know how to tell their personal mental health stories safely and effectively. They know how to spread a positive message of hope, resilience, and recovery. They are revolutionizing mental health across Canada and they want to spread the word. They just need your help to do it.

THE GOLDEN RULES

1. Don't push or pressure. For many Jack.org young leaders, this will be the first time they've been interviewed. You're in a position of power and have a chance to give them a positive experience.
2. Respect their privacy. Everyone has a different relationship to their mental health story. Some are more forthcoming than others. Allow them to indicate when they've reached their limit.
3. Youth are not victims. They are powerful, capable, ambitious young people. Their accomplishments are a huge part of their story and deserve your time and attention.

Do give them a chance to tell their mental health stories.

Don't push for details or ask about specifics; this can be triggering for both the interviewee and the listener. They've chosen which personal details they want to share and which they may want to keep to themselves. Please respect these boundaries.

Do ask open-ended questions.

Do ask the interviewee about their advocacy work to improve the mental health landscape in their communities.

Don't approach their narrative as though they're victims to be saved or case studies representing a problem. They may have struggled with their mental health, but these experiences give them insights many lack and need to hear. They are fierce young leaders who are working to make real change. Their stories are good news for Canada and their voices, ideas, and expertise need to be heard.

Don't make assumptions about their mental health story or mental illness. Everyone's experience is different.

Do ensure the person understands the implications of being interviewed and gives informed consent.

Don't assume you know how the person feels or thinks.

Don't imply their illness is incurable.

With thanks and appreciation, Jack.org
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