Reframing crash reporting in news media

Transportation and public health professionals have an important role to play in building public support for addressing road injuries and deaths as a preventable public health crisis. Use the following strategies to change the narrative:

**How to reframe the message**

1. **Choose your target message** that reinforces the Safe Systems approach (e.g., risk of speed, separating users in space and time, vehicle design).

2. **Appeal to people’s concern for others** by highlighting the human toll of such tragic events. Acknowledge the harms caused to loved ones and the larger community.

3. **Provide context** to frame traffic injury as a broader pattern of harm. Speak to the extent of the problem and risk factors that go beyond individual responsibility.

4. **Inspire “can-doism”** by emphasizing that the problem is something that can be addressed, is preventable, and would benefit everyone. Highlight any local efforts to prevent serious crashes.

**How to engage with news media and the public**

- **Be a resource.** Notify your communications team or local journalists that you’re willing to speak on traffic injury.

- **Create your own content.** Anticipate events, large projects, holiday travel, etc. to share info with the public. Pitch stories, write press releases, and use social media to build support for addressing the problem.

- **Make a plan.** Add a communications agenda item to regular meetings. Identify relevant messages and have a procedure for what will be done and who will be responsible.

For the full media framing guide for transportation and public health professionals, visit [www.roadsafety.unc.edu/research/projects/2019r29/](http://www.roadsafety.unc.edu/research/projects/2019r29/)