

***Staff Sexual Misconduct:  
The Agency and the News  
Media***

July 17, 2003

## **Sources of Conflict:**

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- Competing interests of your organization and the media;
- “Sensational” aspects of sex-related cases; and
- Appearance of secrecy or lack of being forthcoming by the agency.

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**YOU ARE NOT IN CONTROL!**

# The New Century:

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- Information age;
  - Sources of information everywhere
- 24/7 news media;
- You may be “today’s” news – it is a slow news day; and
- Deadlines are NOW.

# What affects your relationship with the media?

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- Location in the US
  - Quality of media
- Your agency's reputation
  - Past cases
  - What the community thinks of you
- Responsiveness to the media
  - Quality of PIO
  - Openness or perceived openness of the "boss"
- Relationship with your staff

# Policies and Procedures

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- Media policy exists;
- Staff are trained;
- PIO is:
  - Qualified
  - In the loop
  - Responsive
- Up-to-date media guide, materials

# Establishing or Fixing Your Relationship

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- The middle of a crisis is NOT the time to build a relationship with the media
- Communicating routinely with the media about what's happening
- Build relationships with the reporters who routinely cover you
- Other ways?

# Sexual Misconduct Allegation

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- Decide who speaks
- Now or later ?
- Opportunity to get out your message:
  - Zero tolerance;
  - Conduct not tolerated;
  - Majority of staff are good;
  - We take this seriously
- Tell staff something.

# Proactive

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- The media may/will find out that you have a new initiative?
  - Staff
  - Inmates
- Motives?
- Responses?
- Involvement of the community leadership in initiative.
- Involve your PIO staff in what you are doing

# Conclusions

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- Media is always there
- Understand that you have limited control
- Find your circle of influence and work in it
- Use opportunities to get your message out