

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

March 11, 2004

Sources of Conflict:

- 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.
 - Past history

YOU ARE NOT IN CONTROL!

The New Century:

- 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?

- 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"
- Other sources of information
 - Unions, prosecutor, investigating organization

Policies and Procedures

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

Establishing or Fixing Your Relationship

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

Sexual Misconduct Allegation

- 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

- 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

- 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