

MEDIA

Trans and GNC people have the same right to be treated with accuracy, dignity and respect as anybody else. They have the same right to live their lives free from harassment. They also face risks that the majority of the population does not have to contend with. How the media covers Trans and GNC issues can really make a difference.

Best Practices in Media Coverage

Is this person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity relevant to the story? If it's not immediately relevant to the story or profile, there is no need to include it. If it is relevant, then be sure to use accurate and respectful terminology.

Include LGBT angles in stories that may not immediately appear to have an LGBT focus. Stories like immigration, healthcare, housing, and even the economy can have

LGBT angles. One of the questions to ask is, "What impact does this have on someone who is LGBT?" Finding subjects who can speak to this angle is important.

Challenge anti-LGBT activists with accurate information about the LGBT community. Often, pundits will make claims about the LGBT community that are not based on fact as a way to score political points. Do not let these fallacies stand. Rather, note the inaccuracies when they are stated and present clear and factual information instead.

Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Avoid** omitting coverage of Mississippi's ant-LGBT laws.
- **Avoid** speaking only to anti-LGBT activists about LGBT people.
- **Avoid** equating being religious as being anti-gay and vice versa.

Story Ideas

- LGBT people are not just LGBT. They are multifaceted people with rich personal lives. Try to create stories that show how LGBT people are part of the community.
- Though the media regularly portrays them in opposition, faith communities and the LGBT community often overlap in positive ways. Speak with LGBT people about their faith journeys, allies of faith about their LGBT acceptance, and faith leaders who minister to the LGBT community.
- Focus on the activism of communities of color in Mississippi: Much of the coverage and storytelling around the LGBT community has centered on the experiences of gay white men. As a result, the experiences and advocacy of the communities of color are often under reported. Be sure to recognize the achievements and experiences of LGBT people of color.
- Focus on the activism of the transgender community in Mississippi: The transgender community in the South is prolific in activism and it is important to highlight both the accomplishments that they have brought about and the struggles that they face.