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Challenging Stereotypes – effective use of the media

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SANE Australia's mission is to help people affected by mental illness through education, applied research and campaigning for improved services and attitudes.

SANE campaigns and works for

- An end to stigma and discrimination
- Access to effective treatments – early and ongoing
- Support programs in the community
- Help for family and other carers

The SANE Charter for a better life for Australians affected by mental illness

The media is an important ally in this campaigning as it influences decision makers and fosters an informed, supportive community.

SANE's media work incorporates

- creating interest in the issues around mental illness
- encouraging its responsible and accurate reporting.

SANE Steps to effective use of the media in mental health

1. Media work is part of SANE's **core business**
2. SANE has staff **skilled** in and **dedicated** to media work
3. SANE Media activities are both **planned** and **opportunistic**
4. SANE staff build **relationships** with the media in order to **understand** their needs
 - SANE staff work to keep **informed** about developments in the mental health area
 - SANE **generates** 'newsworthy' reports/research and human stories
 - SANE contributes **human interest** by supporting consumers and carers to tell their stories
 - SANE provides an Australia-wide (freecall) contact point
5. SANE staff are **accessible** and **responsive** to media demands
6. SANE **monitors** media coverage to assess effectiveness

The above points will be discussed in the context of resources which successfully generated media interest in 2002 - *Schizophrenia: Costs*, the *SANE Mental Health Report 2000* and the SANE StigmaWatch program.

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