



**NRC-RIM**

National Resource Center for  
Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants

# GUIDELINES FOR PRODUCING PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

# WHAT IS A PSA?

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Public Service Announcements, or PSAs, are short messages on radio, television, and/or social media that are disseminated for free in order to raise awareness of, and change public attitudes and behaviors towards a social issue.

PSAs are often visual stories that provide information to an audience, evoke an emotion, and often have a call to action (donating money, spreading awareness, changing habits, etc.)

## PSA FORMATS



Film



Radio



Print

# PRODUCING A PSA

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## STEP 1: PREPARE



Identify a topic or cause that you want to highlight in the PSA.



Determine your audience. Think about what your audience knows or doesn't know about the issue. Think about what they care about and what might get them to take action.



Determine what your call to action will be and make it as specific and concrete as possible.

# STEP 2: RESEARCH



Research the topic you want to make your PSA about. Gather stats, facts and imagery in order to effectively maximize your PSA.

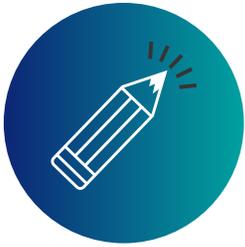


Research other PSAs in order to get inspiration and ideas. Brainstorm ways to highlight your key message. If possible, have members of your target audience take part in this process to identify strategies for maximum impact.



Identify a 'hook'. A hook is whatever you use to grab the listener or viewer's attention. Determine the format of your PSA. What would be the best possible way to relay info: audio, video or print?

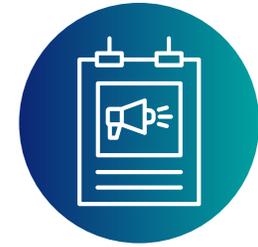
# STEP 3: WRITING



Based on the format you are using, prepare an outline. Write down the major points you want to convey in the PSA.



For audio and video, write your script. Your PSAs should be under 30 seconds, so make sure your script is short but impactful. Have a beginning, middle and end. Use simple, conversational language. Keep your sentences concise and to-the-point.



For print, keep information simple on the layout of the PSA. Don't pick extremely disturbing or violent pictures and don't use images that are not ethical. Start planning the layout of the PSA.

# STEP 4: PRODUCTION

## FILM

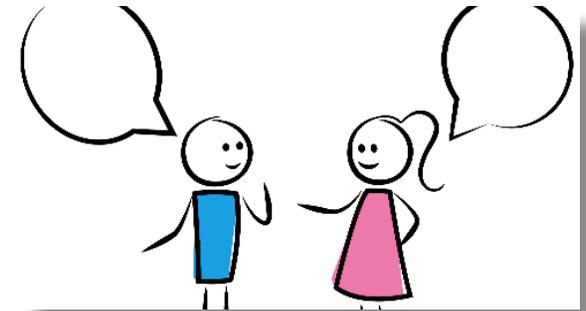
### Storyboard

A storyboard is a visual outline for your video. It is made up of a series of images that show what is going to happen in your video from start to finish. A simple way to look at it is that a storyboard is like a comic strip of your video. Storyboards can be simple or complex. They're usually hand-drawn, although some people prefer to use storyboarding software to create their images.



#### Storyboard:

Create a storyboard for your PSA. This will help you to plan your PSA.



#### Keep it simple:

Your storyboard doesn't have to be complex. You can do a simple sketch or doodle that shows how the PSA will look. Sort of like a comic book.

# STEP 4: PRODUCTION

## FILM



**Film:** Use a camera phone or any available camera and film your PSA. When filming with a camera phone, make sure to shoot in landscape (holding the phone sideways).



**Audio:** You can use your camera to record audio. You can also use a phone to record audio using a voice recording app. If your budget allows, use professional recording equipment.



**Actors:** If your PSA features people, then you can use both professional and non-professional actors depending on your budget. Make sure to get signed consent for any audio, video or picture of people.



**Edit:** If your PSA needs to be edited, use free editing software such as iMovie or Movie Maker. You can also use editing software to add sound effects and music to make it more interesting.

# STEP 4: PRODUCTION

## RADIO



**Actors:** If the budget allows, hire professional voice recording artists. You can also use non-professional voice artists (like friends, family and colleagues).



**Recording:** You can use a recording device such as a recording app available on your phone. Make sure to use either headphones with a mic, an external mic or a headset while recording in a quiet area. Also make sure to record multiple versions. If you have the budget, record your PSA in a recording studio using professional equipment.



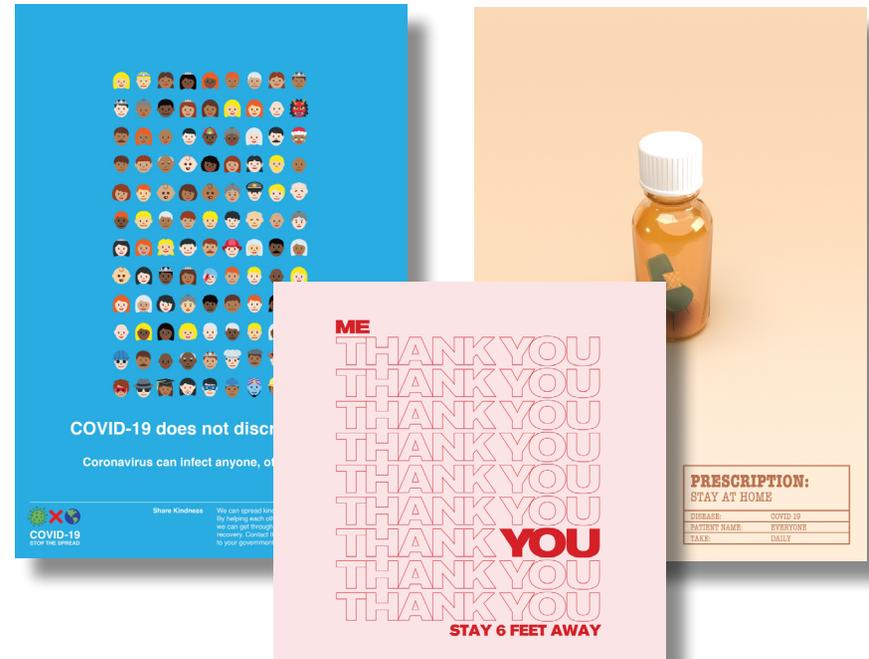
**Editing:** If your PSA needs to be edited, there are free editing softwares available. You can also use editing softwares to add sound effects and music to add flair.

# STEP 4: PRODUCTION

## PRINT



**Design:** Design a PSA poster or graphic using design softwares. Make sure the poster is eye-catching and conveys the message through less text.



**Style:** Exhibit personal style, voice and design to enhance the written informational content. You can use icons, images, colorful backgrounds and a variety of fonts to convey the message to the audience.

# STEP 5: DISTRIBUTION

## SOCIAL MEDIA



You can distribute your PSAs on a variety of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Vimeo and Whatsapp. Make sure to use appropriate hashtags for maximum reach.

## TELEVISION



Contact a TV station by phone or e-mail; briefly explain the purpose and message of your PSA, and why the topic is relevant to the particular station. Explain how the PSA fits into your overall media campaign, the goals of the campaign, and how running it at the times you're asking for will help the campaign be more effective.

## RADIO



Reach out to a radio station. Make sure your PSA follows their guidelines. Send both digital and hard copies once you get approved.

# TIPS

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- BE AUTHENTIC BUT KEEP IT SIMPLE
- CONVEY YOUR MESSAGE USING FACTS BUT ALSO USE EMOTIONS
- MAKE SURE YOUR PSA IS EASILY RELATABLE
- DELIVER ONE CORE MESSAGE WITH CLARITY
- USE FREE RESOURCES TO CREATE YOUR PSA AT A LOWER COST
- GET INPUT AND FEEDBACK BEFORE DISTRIBUTION

# EXAMPLES

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## FILM

[Example 1](#)

[Example 2](#)

[Example 3](#)

[Example 4](#)

[Example 5](#)

## RADIO

[Example 1](#)

[Example 2](#)

[Example 3](#)

[Example 4](#)

[Example 5](#)

## PRINT

[Example 1](#)

[Example 2](#)

[Example 3](#)

[Example 4](#)

[Example 5](#)

# RESOURCES

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<http://unsplash.com>

<http://pexels.com>

<http://pixabay.com>



<https://www.pexels.com/videos/>

<https://pixabay.com/videos/>

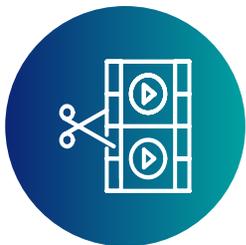
<https://www.videezy.com>



<http://www.soundzabound.com>

<https://www.purple-planet.com>

<https://www.jamendo.com/explore>



<https://www.apple.com/imovie/>

<https://www.lwks.com>

<https://moviemakeronline.com>



<https://www.audacityteam.org>

<https://free-audio-editor.com/>

<https://www.apple.com/mac/garageband/>



<https://www.freepik.com>

<https://www.vecteezy.com>

<https://www.canva.com>