CASE: A reporter is working on a story for the people section of her yearbook about a freshman with dyslexia. The young man speaks openly about his disability. The reporter has also made sure to explain how and where the story will be presented. When she interviewed him, he was forthcoming with information about the challenges he faces as a result of his disability as well as how he manages to overcome those challenges. He seemed both interested and excited by the opportunity to be featured in the book. The reporter plans to present his story fairly and honestly-it will be a positive story about overcoming challenges.

The boy's mother called his counselor and wanted to know why the yearbook was doing a story about her son's dyslexia. She wants permission to review the story prior to publication to ensure that her son is presented in a favorable manner. The adviser told the counselor that the reporter would check and double-check her information and quotes with the source, but neither the boy nor the mother would have permission to review the story prior to publication. The adviser also told her the yearbook would drop the story if either she or her son were uncomfortable with a story running. What advice would you give the staff as to how to respond to the mother if she still wants the story to run but insists on seeing the story prior to publication?

***ACTIVITY:*** How would you handle the case referenced above? Develop a policy plan that would address this issue.

***READ:***

* [SPJ Ethics Case Study](https://www.spj.org/ecs6.asp)
* [Wheeling and Dealing and Pre-Publication Review](https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2003/wheeling-and-dealing-and-pre-publication-review/)

***WORK:***

* Based on the above readings, discuss how you would incorporate pre-publication review in this case?
  + TO DISCUSS:
    - Would the published article create harm in this situation?
      * Discuss the mother’s motives, concerns. If you were to allow for pre-publication review, would you agree to it in all cases?
      * If you were to allow for pre-publication review to ease the mother’s concerns, how would you handle the situation if the mother were to feel the article unfavorably represents her child? Would you still publish?
      * In this case, it’s important to note the story’s purpose? Is the information critical for public consumption? Would the public be harmed if the article was not published based on the mother’s concerns?
* Work together in small groups to ***develop*** a general policy for pre-publication review. Use the chart below to develop your plan.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is pre-publication review allowed? If so, when? |  |
| Why would pre-publication review be used? Benefits? | (Example: Prior review could allow for additional accuracy.) |
| What would be the limitations of prior review? | (Example: Would the source be allowed to eliminate or alter information? If accuracy is questioned, what you request be provided to confirm the information?) |
| How would you incorporate transparency for your audience? | (Example: Would you include an editor’s note?) |