

Cindi Creager
Co-Founder, CreagerCole Communications

Cindi Creager is a master media trainer and media relations expert with 20 years of communications experience in the news industry and LGBT non-profit world, including a successful tenure at both *ABC News* and GLAAD. She has prepared hundreds of people for high profile media appearances on a range of national platforms including all the major broadcast and cable news networks, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and beyond. She has also placed numerous stories and spokespeople in outlets ranging from *The New York Times*, to *USA Today* to *Time Magazine*. Her number one strength is connecting authentically with people. Friends, colleagues and professional contacts have told Cindi that her compassion, grace, humility, and listening skills are rare gifts not easily taught. She has an immense commitment to inspiring and empowering people to be their best when speaking to the media. She works with academics, activists, athletes, attorneys, authors, executives, physicians, and many more.

Prior to co-founding CreagerCole Communications Cindi served as the Director of Communications & Marketing at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center in New York City. As a member of the Center's senior leadership team she oversaw external communications and marketing initiatives for the 29-year old agency. She launched a new e-newsletter called *Front and Center*, highlighting the Center's life-saving programs and services. She also project managed the first two phases of a comprehensive re-branding project with the pro bono support of experts from the firm, Lippincott.

Before joining the Center in December of 2010, Cindi served for five-and-a-half years as the Director of National News for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), working tirelessly to ensure fair, accurate and inclusive national news coverage for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. In addition to her media training track record referenced above, during her GLAAD years Cindi also brokered agreements with top media outlets including *NBC News*, *CBS News* and the *Associated Press* to strengthen editorial standards for LGBT related coverage. At GLAAD Cindi publicly criticized media when stories were off the mark, biased or sensational, which eventually led to public apologies, corrections and promises of improved future coverage. In July of 2010 she successfully led GLAAD's campaign to persuade *NBC's "Today Show"* to open its "Modern Wedding Contest" to same-sex couples.

Cindi also helped countless individuals and organizations with crisis communications plans, message framing and talking point prep. Cindi nationally elevated the stories of those impacted by anti-gay attitudes: a woman named Elke Kennedy, whose 20-year-old gay son Sean was brutally murdered in Greenville, South Carolina and told her story to *CNN*, helping to ensure passage of an LGBT inclusive federal hate crimes law; Anthony Bustos, an Army Sergeant who came out publicly on *ABC World News Tonight* at great professional risk under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"; and Janice Langbehn, who was turned away at a Miami hospital while her partner lay dying. Langbehn's story in *The*

New York Times prompted the Obama Administration to change federal policy with respect to hospital visitation by same-sex couples. Langbehn also won the Presidential Citizen's Medal for having the bravery to share her story and provoke change. Langbehn credits Cindi for helping her find her voice and articulate it confidently on a national stage. Cindi also shared the stories of several bi-national same-sex couples facing separation because of discriminatory immigration laws barring them from sponsoring one another for permanent residency in the United States.

Previously, Cindi spent 13-years as a local news director, reporter and anchor in Alaska, working for *KTVF* and *KTVA*, and field producer/cinematographer in New York City, working for *ABC News*, *PBS Frontline's*, Raney Aronson, (now executive producer) and several independent documentary producers. She earned a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and an M.S. from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. During her tenure at *ABC News*, Creager shot and field-produced for the series *Hopkins 24/7*, about life inside Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore; the program won a Columbia DuPont Award for Excellence in Broadcast Journalism. She lives in New York City's Greenwich Village with Rainie Cole, her partner of 18 years. Cindi and Rainie were legally married in Connecticut in 2008.