

# Communicating Your Message: Media Tips & Tools



NCVRW is an excellent time for your organization to increase its visibility in the community, promote valuable resources for victims of crime, build or reactivate partnerships, and engage in a dialogue with diverse audiences. By creating a comprehensive NCVRW public awareness campaign involving social media, traditional media, and public events, you will reach colleagues, local organizations, and the wider community with important information on crime victims' issues, rights, and services—including the services offered by your organization.

This section presents sample draft text for a range of different media. Marked with symbols that represent recommended platforms for sharing, these pieces can be used as they stand or tailored to your particular audience and message. Also included are tips and tools for pitching stories, maximizing outreach efforts, increasing engagement, and advocating for victims with the media. By customizing the sample media and adapting it to fit the activities and priorities of your organization, you will increase your visibility, reach a greater audience, and increase the success of your NCVRW campaign.

## Platforms for Sharing



Professional network



Facebook



Twitter



Blog

## CONTENTS

### Media Plans

- Crafting an NCVRW Media Plan

### Social Media

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Blogs
- Other Social Media Platforms, including Podcasts **NEW**

### Traditional Media

- Press Release
- Letter to the Editor
- Opinion Editorial
- Public Service Announcements

### Working With the Media

- Working With Reporters

### Advocating for Victims With the Media

# MEDIA PLANS

## ***Crafting an NCVRW Media Plan***

A well-thought-out media plan is an effective way to share your message and increase your organization's exposure. Engaging a wide audience for your NCVRW activities can be time-consuming and may feel overwhelming for an organization with a small staff. However, an active social media presence is easy to achieve and can vastly increase your connections and reach.

You can tailor the sample media plans described here to meet the needs and capacity of your organization, and to set media and outreach goals for the entire year. It can take as much (or as little) time as you have to dedicate to it.

## **Considerations When Crafting a Media Plan**

- Who is your audience?
- What is your message? What do you want to accomplish?
- Where do you want to engage your audience (local, state, or national level)?
- What is the best method for communicating your message? (Your mode and method should be adapted for each communication.)
- When and how often should you communicate?
- Why is this message important to your audience?

## **Important To Remember**

- Social media is about two-way communication. To have successful engagement, consider following organizations in your network and then engage with their posts.
- Content is key. Posts should be relevant, timely, and consistent.
- Be intentional with what you share and post. Make sure your content fits into your overall messaging strategy and brand.
- Use #NCVRW2022 in your posts.



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# CRAFTING AN NCVRW MEDIA PLAN

## Sample Plan 1

### For those—

- interested in building a stronger media presence, and
- able to dedicate a small amount of staff time (approximately 1 hour) each week.

### Throughout March and April—

- post on Twitter and Facebook two or three times each week. Share posts by OVC and other relevant organizations, copy a sample post from this guide (see pages 6–9), or craft your own content.
- if you already have an established blog, write one blog post about your organization's NCVRW activities.

## Set Achievable Goals

Support your organizational activities by setting achievable, measurable goals such as—

- increasing your followers by 5 percent.
- achieving an engagement rate of 1 percent or higher. Engagements include likes, shares, retweets, URL clicks, and any other action a user takes on your post. You can find your engagement rate in any of the social platforms' reporting areas.
- establishing online connections with other organizations by liking or following their pages.

## Sample Plan 2

### For those—

- interested in building a stronger media presence and forming relationships with local news organizations; and
- able to dedicate a moderate amount of staff time (4–8 hours each week).

### Throughout March and April—

- post at least four times on Twitter and four times on Facebook each week. You can respond to another organization's post, inform the public about your resources, post a relevant news article, or use the sample posts on pages 6–9.
- write one blog post about how your organization is participating in NCVRW this year.
- write a news release about your organization's recognition of NCVRW.
- submit a letter to the editor or an opinion-editorial to your local newspaper.

## Set Achievable Goals

Support your organizational activities by setting achievable, measurable goals such as—

- increasing your followers by 10 percent.
- achieving an engagement rate of 1 percent or higher. Engagements include likes, shares, retweets, URL clicks, and any other action a user takes on your post. You can find your engagement rate in any of the social platforms' reporting areas.
- having a letter to the editor or an opinion-editorial published in the local newspaper.



## Sample Plan 3

### For those—

- interested in reaching a wide audience and increasing visibility, and
- able to devote significant staff time (8 or more hours each week).

### Throughout March and April—

- post at least five to seven times per week on Twitter and Facebook. Use a variety of tactics—share others' posts, respond to other organizations, post news articles, highlight neighboring events and services, schedule a Twitter chat, use the sample posts on pages 6–9, or craft your own NCVRW messages related to this year's theme, *Rights, access, equity, for all victims*.
- write two blog posts about NCVRW. Publish the first one the week before NCVRW, detailing the history of the week and what your organization is doing to commemorate the week. Publish the second post after NCVRW as a followup on your organization's events and national NCVRW events, such as the U.S. Department

of Justice's National Crime Victims' Service Awards Ceremony.

- submit a letter to the editor and an opinion-editorial for print in your local newspaper each month.
- write two or more news releases. Possible topics include your participation in the mayor's proclamation, your own organization's NCVRW activities, and other events commemorating the week.

### Set Achievable Goals

Support your organizational activities with achievable, measurable goals such as—

- increasing your followers by 10–20 percent.
- achieving an engagement rate of 2 percent or higher. Engagements include likes, shares, retweets, URL clicks, and any other action a user takes on your post. You can find your engagement rate in any of the social platforms' reporting areas.
- connecting with professionals and community members in a variety of ways.



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# SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to alerting traditional journalists to important stories, social media allows you to engage directly with the public and build relationships through succinct messaging that is unfiltered by traditional journalism outlets. The most important social media platforms for your campaign are available for free, though many allow you to pay for access to a larger audience.

## TIPS FOR USING IMAGES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The 2022 NCVRW Social Media Artwork was created specifically to be used with the Facebook and Twitter platforms. OVC recommends using JPG or PNG files when posting images on social media.

Remember, there is a difference between how things will display on your personal timeline and how things will display in a user's newsfeed. Make sure that you are choosing dimensions based on where you want the majority of viewers to see your image.

### Tips for Facebook Images

- Profile picture images must be at least 180 x 180 pixels. Profile pictures will be cropped to a circular shape in ads and posts, but will remain square in shape when people visit your page. Business page profile images will be cropped to fit a square.
- Cover photos (i.e., banners) must be at least 400 x 150 pixels. Anything less than that will be stretched.
- If you need to resize an image, OVC recommends that you maintain the aspect ratio of the original file.

### Tips for Twitter Images

- The recommended size for profile images is 400 x 400 pixels. The largest display of your profile picture is on your homepage and can be viewed by your followers as well as individuals who stumble upon your page.
- The recommended size for header images (i.e., banners) is 1,500 x 500 pixels. Your header image is quite a bit larger than your profile photo, so make sure to save it at the highest resolution possible.
- OVC recommends that you do not enlarge any of the Twitter social media ads, as this will compromise the image quality.
- When attaching an image to a tweet, the way the image is cropped and displayed will vary slightly depending on whether you are attaching one image, multiple images, or sharing a link. To prevent unexpected cropping, horizontally center your content so the most important elements of the image will be visible.



Many organizations already have a Facebook business or cause page. Rather than opening a new page specific to a particular topic, use these established pages with built-in audiences to promote NCVRW activities and information. Post photos, videos, organizational content, invitations to upcoming events, and links leading back to your website. Engage your audience by replying to their comments on posts and liking or sharing posts from other people and organizations in your network.

Use the Facebook Live feature to stream live events or answer questions in real time. You can also temporarily pin a post highlighting NCVRW to the top of your page to increase its visibility. Use the sample posts below or create your own to launch your NCVRW Facebook campaign. To download NCVRW theme artwork sized specifically for sharing on Facebook, visit [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022/ncvrw-artwork/social-media-artwork](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022/ncvrw-artwork/social-media-artwork). Be sure to use applicable hashtags, and add #NCVRW2022 to your NCVRW posts.

## 6 Tips for an Effective Facebook Post

- Keep your content concise; readers should be able to easily access the information they need.
- Include a link to a relevant article or website.
- Be timely.
- Post at varied times throughout your social campaign for maximum impressions.
- Post intentionally, as part of a consistent sharing strategy.
- Include an image (images receive more engagement and are favored by Facebook's algorithm).

## Sample Facebook Posts

### Leading up to NCVRW (posting dates: April 1–23, 2022)

- This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week will be observed April 24–30, 2022. Join this week-long initiative to promote victims' rights and honor crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. Get started by using the 2022 NCVRW Resource Guide. #NCVRW2022 [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Want to get involved in National Crime Victims' Rights Week? Access @OJPOVC's 2022 NCVRW Resource Guide to help plan and promote your community events between April 24–30, 2022. #NCVRW2022 [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme is Rights, access, equity, for all victims. Use the hashtag #NCVRW2022 to join the conversation and learn about available resources and community events during April 24–30, 2022. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- National Crime Victims' Rights Week begins Sunday, April 24, 2022. Visit the Office for Victims of Crime's #NCVRW2022 website to learn about available resources and ideas for events and activities. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- #NCVRW2022 is almost here! This year's theme is Rights, access, equity, for all victims. Discover information about available resources and community events by visiting the 2022 NCVRW Resource Guide website. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)



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- National Crime Victims' Rights Week recognizes the crime victim advocates, allied professionals, and selfless volunteers who continuously work to protect victims' rights and provide critical services. Learn more and get involved by visiting @OJPOVC's #NCVRW2022 Resource Guide. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Looking to plan, promote, or locate victims' services events? Visit @OJPOVC's Events page at [www.ovc.ojp.gov/events](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/events). #NCVRW2022
- Did you know that victims' rights may vary by state? Visit <https://victimlaw.org> today to research state, federal, or tribal law. #NCVRW2022
- Support is available for victims of crime. Call 855-4-VICTIM to learn about victims' rights and options, confidentially and compassionately. <https://victimconnect.org>. #NCVRW2022
- During #NCVRW2022 and throughout the year, we want to let victims of crime know that they are not alone. Find compelling artwork, awareness posters, and other resources to raise awareness about victims' rights and services. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)

## During NCVRW (posting dates: April 24–30, 2022)

- This week is #NCVRW2022! Learn how you and your community can help raise awareness about victims' rights, resources, and services. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- It's National Crime Victims' Rights Week! Join @OJPOVC and communities across the country to raise awareness and honor victims' rights. #NCVRW2022 [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Download the #NCVRW2022 artwork and sample proclamation to help raise awareness for National Crime Victims' Rights Week. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Use the @OJPOVC #NCVRW2022 Resource Guide to help raise awareness about victims' rights, resources, and services within your community this week. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- During #NCVRW2022, visit [www.ovcttac.gov](http://www.ovcttac.gov) for the tools and resources you need to help build your capacity to serve all victims of crime.
- Crime victim compensation can help reimburse victims for medical services and other costs incurred because of a crime. Visit the @OJPOVC "Help in Your State" page for contact information for your state's crime victim compensation program: [www.ovc.ojp.gov/help-for-victims/help-in-your-state](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/help-for-victims/help-in-your-state) #NCVRW2022
- The OVC-funded Tribal Resource Tool is a searchable directory of services available for all AI/AN survivors of crime and abuse in Indian Country. The tool includes services for all ages of AI/AN survivors and victims, forms of victimization, locations, and needs of victims, including justice, safety, healing, and support. Connect now. [www.tribalresourcetool.org](http://www.tribalresourcetool.org) #NCVRW2022

## TECH TIP

### Embedding Links in Facebook

To embed a link in a Facebook post, copy the URL into the text field and wait until Facebook generates a thumbnail and page description. Then delete the URL text, enter the rest of your content, and complete the post.

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Twitter is an information-sharing network where each post, or “tweet,” is limited to 280 characters. If you set up a new account, choose a Twitter handle (username) that other users will recognize (often the name or abbreviation of your organization) and an easily identifiable profile picture. To be an active Twitter user, follow other individuals and organizations, follow their followers, retweet their tweets, and promote them to your audience. Post your own tweets that link back to your website or your other social media pages and use images and graphics when possible.

Create longer form messages by replying to your own tweets and creating a “thread.” Maximize your Twitter presence by staying engaged in conversations on subjects that are important to your mission, and by quickly responding to other users’ tweets and mentions of your organization or causes.

Adding a hashtag groups your tweet with related posts from other users, and is a useful way to become part of a conversation. Make sure to use the most applicable tags, and add #NCVRW2022 to your NCVRW tweets.

## Five Tips for Tweeting

New users of Twitter may have difficulty adhering to a character limit. Use the tips below to make your tweets more concise:

- Replace spelled out numbers (“nine”) with numerals (“9”).
- Replace “and” with “+,” “&,” or “/” when appropriate.
- Use contractions.
- Substitute long words with shorter synonyms.
- Shorten links or remove “http:” and “https:” from the beginning of links, when possible.
- If you need additional characters or want to share longer-form content, you can ‘thread’ tweets together.

## Sample Tweets

### Leading up to NCVRW (posting dates: April 1–April 30 2022)

- National Crime Victims’ Rights Week promotes victims’ rights and honors crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. Join us during this week-long initiative from April 24 to 30, 2022. #NCVRW2022 #victimservices [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Want to get involved in #NCVRW2022? Use @OJPOVC’s 2022 NCVRW Resource Guide to plan and promote your community events from April 24 to 30, 2022. #supportvictims [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Join the conversation! Use the hashtag #NCVRW2022 to learn about available resources and community events happening April 24–30, 2022. #victimservices #victimsrights
- National Crime Victims’ Rights Week is almost here! Follow #NCVRW2022 to stay connected and find compelling artwork and resources to raise awareness about crime victims’ rights and services at [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022).
- Visit @OJPOVC’s #NCVRW2022 Resource Guide at [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022) for tips on observing National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. #NCVRW2022 #victimservices
- National Crime Victims’ Rights Week begins Sunday, April 24, 2022. Visit [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022) for information about resources, events, and activities.
- Need inspiration for your #NCVRW2022 event? See the 2022 NCVRW Resource Guide for helpful tips on advocating for victims in the media. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)



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- Plan your yearly efforts to help honor victims of crime in your community with the #NCVRW2022 Commemorative Calendar of crime victim-related observances at [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022).

## During NCVRW (posting dates: April 24–30, 2022)

- #NCVRW2022 starts today! Discover resources at [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022) to learn how you and your community can help promote awareness.
- It's National Crime Victims' Rights Week! This year's theme is Rights, access, equity, for all victims. Join @OJPOVC in raising awareness and honoring crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. #NCVRW2022 [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Join communities nationwide as they observe #NCVRW2022 this week and promote crime victims' rights and services. #victimservices #victimsrights [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Access @OJPOVC's #NCVRW2022 Resource Guide to learn about this year's theme of Rights, access, equity, for all victims. #victimservices [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Have you or someone you know been a victim of crime? The @OJPOVC #NCVRW2022 Referral Flier lists national resources that can offer support. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- Do you know what victims' rights exist in your state? Visit [www.victimlaw.org](http://www.victimlaw.org) to research state, federal, or tribal law. #NCVRW2022
- Use @OJPOVC's searchable database of victims' rights at [www.victimlaw.org](http://www.victimlaw.org) to research state, federal, and tribal laws. #NCVRW2022
- Visit [www.ovcttac.gov](http://www.ovcttac.gov) for the tools and resources you need to help build your capacity to serve victims of crime. #NCVRW2022
- @OJPOVC TTAC offers a variety of free trainings to help you and your organization better engage communities and support victims. Learn more at [www.ovcttac.gov](http://www.ovcttac.gov). #NCVRW2022
- By pooling expertise and resources, we can support the healing and recovery of all crime victims and help build thriving communities. Start your #NCVRW2022 activities with the proclamation at [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022).
- Support is available for victims of crime. Call 855-4-VICTIM to learn about victims' rights and options, confidentially and compassionately. <https://victimconnect.org> #NCVRW2022
- During #NCVRW2022 and throughout the year, we want to let victims of crime know that they are not alone. Find helpful tools to support and raise awareness about victims' rights and services. [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022)
- The OVC-funded Tribal Resource Tool is a searchable directory of services available for all AI/AN survivors of crime and abuse in Indian Country. The tool includes services for all ages of AI/AN survivors and victims, forms of victimization, locations, and needs of victims. Connect now. [www.tribalresourcetool.org](http://www.tribalresourcetool.org) #NCVRW2022

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## BLOGS

Consider sharing more in-depth messages with your community online through a blog. Post as frequently as you wish, with a goal of at least once a month. Be sure to provide a link to your blog on your Facebook, Twitter, and other social media pages.

### ***Steps to an Engaging Blog Post***

- Target your audience by using an appropriate reading level and relevant content.
- Check your facts—use only statistics that come from reliable sources, and cite them.
- State your main points in your introduction and again in the conclusion.
- Limit your post to no more than 750 words.
- Time the release of your blog post to coincide with events and current news.

### ***Ideas for Blog Posts***

- Information for crime victims, such as crime victim compensation or victims' rights.
- Details about an upcoming event or a recap following an event.
- Awareness days, weeks, and months.
- Suggestions for self-care.
- Personal stories, including suggestions for self-care and how victims used local resources to assist in their recovery.
- Lists of important resources and services.
- Relevant interviews with important local officials or executives in the organization.



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## Sample Blog Post

### Improving Language Access for Immigrant and Refugee Crime Victims

The United States is remarkably diverse. According to American Community Survey data collected from 2009 to 2013, American households speak more than 350 languages.<sup>1</sup> Diversity, in all of its forms, is the bedrock of American democracy. However, for the roughly 25.1 million individuals over the age of 5 who do not speak English as their primary language—who are categorized as Limited English Proficient (LEP)—their linguistic diversity is too often a barrier to accessing critical public services.

Systemic inequalities in language access are particularly harmful to immigrant and refugee victims of crime, who are more at risk of robbery, assault, theft, human trafficking, and intimate partner violence than the general population. A self-reported survey of 90 undocumented Latinos living in Memphis, Tennessee, found that 63 percent of respondents had been a victim of one or more crimes.<sup>2</sup>

Immigrants and refugees are also less likely to report the crimes they experience.<sup>3</sup> Many immigrant and refugee crime victims experience added layers of stress, isolation, and depression when they are not able to access services due to language barriers. Nearly one in three Spanish-speaking Latinas surveyed by the [National Latina Network at Casa de Esperanza](#) reported that they had encountered challenges accessing domestic violence-related services because of language barriers.<sup>4</sup>

Addressing language access barriers for immigrant and refugee populations is rarely as simple as translating forms or brochures into non-English languages. While translation is part of the solution, victim service providers must go further. Under federal law and executive orders, all agencies that receive federal funds must make a reasonable effort to provide meaningful language access for LEP individuals. In practice, though, victim service providers are often unaware of this requirement or do not understand how to provide meaningful language access.

Ultimately, access is about choice and knowledge. LEP crime victims need to be informed of their rights in a language they can understand. They need to be made aware of the availability of culturally competent services to help them. Organizations must respect cultural differences. They should have formal [language access policies](#) and qualified interpreters and translators available, when needed. We, in the victim services field, must make a conscious decision to build organizations that reflect our multicultural and multilingual nation, from the inside out.

To learn more about advocacy by and for immigrant and refugee victims of crime, view [\[link to local resources from your organization or national organizations\]](#).

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2015). “2013 American Community Survey.” Retrieved from <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCENSUS/bulletins/122dd88>.

<sup>2</sup> Bucher, Jacob; Manasse, Michelle; and Tarasawa, Beth. (2010). “Undocumented Victims: An Examination of Crimes Against Undocumented Male Migrant Workers.” *Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice*. 7. Retrieved from [www.researchgate.net/publication/267378044\\_Undocumented\\_Victims\\_An\\_Examination\\_of\\_Crimes\\_Against\\_Undocumented\\_Male\\_Migrant\\_Workers](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/267378044_Undocumented_Victims_An_Examination_of_Crimes_Against_Undocumented_Male_Migrant_Workers).

<sup>3</sup> Davis, R.C., and E. Erez. *Immigrant Populations as Victims: Toward a Multicultural Criminal Justice System*. Research in Brief. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, May 1998, NCJ 167571.

<sup>4</sup> National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities and National Domestic Violence Hotline (2013). *Realidades Latinas. A National Survey on the Impact of Immigration and Language Access on Latina Survivors*, (Research Report No. 2013.4). Retrieved from [www.nationallatinonetwork.org/research/nln-research](http://www.nationallatinonetwork.org/research/nln-research).



# OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

## YouTube

YouTube is the second most-visited site on the Internet, making it a powerful platform for sharing information. To begin, set up a [YouTube channel](#) for your organization, which will then link to any Google accounts you have. Choose a name that matches your brand and post your channel URL on your website, Facebook page, and other social networking profiles. If applicable, register for a [YouTube Nonprofit Program](#) account, which gives you more features, including the ability to add clickable “asks” on top of videos and upload longer videos. Use YouTube to upload recordings of presentations and trainings from your organization, as well as highlights of your NCVRW events. Visit [OVC’s YouTube channel](#) for examples of videos to post.

## Instagram

Instagram is a photo-sharing application that lets you upload and share images with your network. Download the Instagram app, [set up an account](#), snap photos of your NCVRW events on your mobile devices, and give your followers a sneak peek before you post them on your website. Expand the audience for your photos by [tagging](#) them with keywords and hashtags to identify or organize them, and be sure to add #NCVRW2022 to relevant posts. Instagram also has a “stories” feature that allows users to post a series of photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours. Instagram interfaces with Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms.

## LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional network for individuals and organizations. To create a [LinkedIn company page](#) for your organization, follow the “setup wizard” to complete a company profile. Be sure to include header and profile images, and focus on keywords from your mission

statement throughout your description. Additionally, use LinkedIn Showcase pages to highlight specific initiatives, such as NCVRW.

## Podcasts

Podcasts are audio and/or video recordings that can be used as a powerful tool for communicating with your audience regardless of their location. To begin a podcast, you will want to identify a theme or topic and a hosting domain and/or platform for your recorded episodes.

A typical podcast may include a series of interviews, stories, lectures, conversations, or events and performances. Individual episodes should be released on a pre-identified reoccurring basis that is appropriate for the subject matter and intended audience. You can choose whether to broadcast your podcast indefinitely or for a set amount of time.

Promote your podcast on your website, blog, social, and email with #NCVRW2022 and the customizable NCVRW theme artwork available at [www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2022).

## Additional Tips for Social Media Posts

In addition to the sample Facebook and Twitter posts listed here, use the following ideas to generate more NCVRW content for your social media sites.

- Download NCVRW theme artwork from the [NCVRW website](#), including NCVRW-specific Facebook and Twitter images.
- Post photos or videos of your organization’s NCVRW planning sessions or events.
- Share posters from OVC’s [gallery of awareness posters](#) on crime- and victim-related topics using your social media platforms.



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- Post links to NCVRW op-eds or news releases from your local newspaper or television station's website.
- Post links to NCVRW statements or proclamations made by local or state officials, and include brief descriptions about these statements.
- Allow other Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn users to post stories, event reminders, pictures, and updates on your timeline by opening your Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn settings. If you allow the general public to engage with your content, be sure to monitor your timeline frequently for negative or offensive posts.
- Post bios and photos of your NCVRW event speakers on your Facebook page in advance of the events, and promote them on Twitter and your other social media channels.
- Ask your social media followers to repost your status updates on their social media networks.
- Post current and recent NCVRW videos on YouTube.



## TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Traditional media reach a broad, general audience through print newspapers, online publications, and radio and television broadcasts. These venues provide additional opportunities to draw attention to crime-related issues in your community, share information about the work of your organization, and ask for community support. The following sample media can be modified for use by your organization during NCVRW and throughout the year.



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## PRESS RELEASE



The purpose of a press release is to generate media coverage for your organization's participation in NCVRW and other events throughout the year. Edit the sample press release to reflect specific issues in your community and to highlight activities, events, and commemorations.

Make sure to share the release with your contacts and local media, but don't forget to post it to your own website, link to it on Facebook, and tweet the link as well. Use this opportunity to generate exposure for your organization, highlight issues related to your mission, and position your spokesperson as an expert in the field. For best results, distribute your release at least 10 days prior to your event. Use the lead time to follow up with reporters and partner organizations, identify spokespeople, answer questions, and create media materials for each important event.

### ***Five Elements of a Noteworthy Press Release***

- Craft an attention-grabbing headline.
- Include the main point in the first paragraph and be sure to address who, what, when, where, and why.
- Use relevant statistics.
- Incorporate a strong quotation to engage your reader.
- Include contact information and additional resources.



## Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

[Name/Title/Organization]

CONTACT

[Phone Number]

[Email]

### **[Your City/Organization] Commemorates National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 24–30, 2022**

[City, State] – [Organization's name], in commemoration of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW), April 24–30, 2022, is hosting [list special events or activities] to raise awareness about crime victims' issues and rights and introduce the community to the important resources and services available.

Crime victims are our family, friends, neighbors, and community members. While we can never truly understand the depth of their trauma and the impact on their lives, we can ensure that equitable, inclusive, culturally appropriate, and gender-responsive services are available to help them. By enforcing victims' rights, expanding access to services, and upholding principles of equity and inclusivity for all, we can enable crime victims to find the justice they seek, in whatever form that might take.

[Your city/organization] will commemorate the advancement of victims' rights and highlight issues surrounding victimization by holding [insert description of event, date, time, and venue]. [Your city/organization] is also honoring [name, title] and [name, title] for their tireless advocacy on behalf of communities that have been affected by crime.

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) leads communities throughout the country in their annual observances of NCVRW by promoting victims' rights and honoring crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. This year's theme—Rights, access, equity, for all victims— spotlights victim service organizations' best practices to reach all victims and help them forge new healing pathways.

[Include a quote from a recognized leader or official in your community/organization about the importance of NCVRW in your community.]

OVC and [your local organization] encourage widespread, but safe, participation in the week's virtual and in-person events. OVC will host the annual National Crime Victims' Service Awards Ceremony in Washington, DC, to honor outstanding individuals and programs that serve victims of crime.

For additional information about this year's NCVRW and how to assist crime victims in your own community, please contact [organization] at [telephone number] or visit [organization]'s website at [web address]. For additional ideas on how to support all victims of crime, visit OVC's website at [www.ovc.ojp.gov](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov).

###

[Your organization's mission statement/boilerplate]



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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Readers' letters and comments are often the most read sections of newspapers and news websites. They are great tools for building awareness about NCVRW. By writing a letter to the editor, you can link NCVRW or one of your organization's programs to a current local, state, or national issue by showing why readers should care about the rights and concerns of crime victims. Ideally, you would cite a reliable recent study, quote statistics about the crime or issue, or stress the need for more research about crimes that are often hidden or underreported.

Consider asking local law enforcement agencies or other organizations to partner with you, or encourage them to write their own letters to highlight the needs of crime victims and how the public can help. Letters that are endorsed by multiple community groups will receive more attention. When you submit your letter to the editor, include your contact information so the newspaper can reach you if it decides to print your letter. If the newspaper does

not publish your letter, consider submitting it to a local organization that publishes a newsletter, post it on your website, or share it on social media.

### ***Five Elements of an Attention-Grabbing Letter***

- Respond to an article or commentary recently published. Begin your letter by citing this article.
- Keep it brief—no more than 250 to 300 words.
- Include a call to action.
- Use verified facts and reference the original sources.
- Include information on where people can learn more about the issue.



## Sample Letter to the Editor

### Domestic Violence Victims Need Housing Options

Domestic violence not only causes emotional and physical harm to victims, but it is also a major cause of homelessness. Domestic violence victims face barriers to safe housing due to a number of factors that may include financial instability, discrimination, or unique safety or confidentiality needs.

Housing programs—temporary, transitional, and permanent—can provide vital services for survivors and are often a key component in helping them find safety and stability. We at *[insert organization name]* hope to use the 2022 **National Crime Victims' Rights Week** to bring attention to the lack of accessible and affordable housing options for survivors.

Housing stability is critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of domestic violence survivors and their children. *[Insert local data and/or supportive articles.]* Shelters play an important role in breaking the link between domestic violence and homelessness, but they often cannot accommodate demand and are generally not intended for stays longer than a few months. In *[insert county]*, there are just *[insert number]* beds at emergency and transitional shelters for domestic violence survivors (*[insert source]*). Elsewhere across the country, there may be even less availability.

To truly respond to this public health crisis, we need to build longer-term housing solutions. Rental or utilities payment assistance, and help with related expenses such as security deposits and relocation costs, are a start. But we must do more. We need trauma-informed programs and meaningful partnerships between domestic violence programs, other victim service organizations, homeless shelters and housing providers, housing authorities, and community groups, particularly those serving marginalized communities. And we need programs that empower victims by offering them wraparound, victim-centered services.

Locally, *[insert at least two local support organizations/services]* are available to help with this growing need. We must expand access for victims of domestic violence and increase options so that they can choose what works best for them as they take back control of their lives. To get involved, *[insert call to action: connect with organization at phone, email, website or reach out to local law enforcement agency/other organization]*.

For those in need of anonymous, 24/7, confidential help, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 (SAFE) or 800-787-3224 (TTY). To learn more about the intersection of domestic violence and homelessness, visit the Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium [website](#).



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## OPINION-EDITORIAL



Newspaper editorial pages—both in print and online—are highly popular among readers. Opinion-editorials (op-eds) are longer than letters to the editor and afford the opportunity to delve more deeply into issues. An op-ed is your chance to influence opinions, affect policy, and highlight the work you or your organization is doing to support crime victims' rights.

One way to develop an op-ed is to research local crime coverage and important issues in your community. For example, does your community offer services for victims of human trafficking? How would a partnership between law enforcement and victim service agencies benefit your community? Use or adapt the sample op-ed on the following page or craft your own to highlight an issue local to your community.

### ***Five Elements of an Attention-Grabbing Op-Ed***

- Be persuasive. Include the latest research and structure a logical argument or rationale.
- Be confident. You are the expert in this field.
- Stay up to date on related events and the cultural conversations about them.
- Use plain language that a wide audience can understand.
- Keep your submission to 800 words or less.



## Sample Op-Ed Column

We often assume that “justice” for crime victims simply means justice in the courtroom—a guilty verdict for the offender, and sentencing commensurate with the seriousness of their crime. But for those who experienced direct harm as a result of the crime, abstract legal notions of justice tend to give way to personal beliefs and feelings about what is just. “Justice” means something different to each victim. Criminal convictions are important to many victims, but often what is even more important is that they be treated with compassion and respect, regardless of the outcome of the case. Helping survivors find their justice means enforcing victims’ rights, listening to and making victims’ needs and wishes a priority, and providing victims with access to the resources and services that can help them heal.

We have come a long way toward establishing and safeguarding victims’ rights. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the American criminal justice system was primarily concerned with protecting the constitutional rights of the accused. The victims themselves were minor players in the legal drama. The tide finally began to turn in 1982, when President Ronald Reagan established the President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime to assess the treatment of crime victims in the criminal justice system. The task force’s **final report** provided 68 recommendations for action by the Federal Government—most of which led to significant changes in policy, programs, and practices at the federal, state, and local levels.

The **Crime Victims’ Rights Act of 2004** (CVRA) increased victim involvement in the federal criminal justice system by guaranteeing them certain basic rights, such as the right to be informed of any court proceedings or parole proceedings, the right to speak at public court proceedings, and the right to confer with the government attorney assigned to their case. But the most fundamental right that it enumerated was the “right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim’s dignity and privacy.” By recognizing the essential humanity of victims and expanding their role in the criminal justice system, the CVRA helped restore power to survivors who often feel powerless in the aftermath of a serious crime.

Since the CVRA became law, evidence has accumulated that what justice means to victims often differs from what justice means in the traditional context of the law. A **study** published by the Urban Institute in 2018, for instance, asked 80 survivors of sex and labor trafficking and 100 human trafficking stakeholders in 8 cities across the country for their definition of justice; only 24 percent of respondents defined it punitively, as incarceration.<sup>5</sup> And a national **survey** conducted by the Alliance for Safety and Justice found that 61 percent of the 800 crime survivors polled supported more spending on prevention and rehabilitation rather than long prison sentences.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hannah Love, Jeanette Hussemann, Lilly Yu, Evelyn McCoy, and Colleen Owens, 2018, *Justice in Their Own Words: Perceptions and Experiences of (In)Justice Among human Trafficking Survivors*, Urban Institute. Retrieved January 24, 2022, from [www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/97351/justice\\_in\\_their\\_own\\_words\\_0.pdf](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/97351/justice_in_their_own_words_0.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Alliance on Safety and Justice, 2016, *Crime Survivors Speak: The First-Ever National Survey on Victims’ View on Safety and Justice*, San Francisco, CA: Tides Center. Retrieved January 24, 2022, from <https://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/Crime%20Survivors%20Speak%20Press%20Release.pdf>.



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Whatever form justice takes within the criminal justice system, fulfilling victims' needs regarding justice requires that their voices be reflected and respected not only in the justice system process, but also in the care and support they receive after the crime has taken place. Survivors must have agency and choice in their interactions with law enforcement, service providers, and health and judicial professionals. And they need a seamless continuum of support to heal from the trauma they suffered. Helping victims find their personal justice is thus a communitywide, holistic, and ongoing effort.

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), part of the Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs, is leaning into that effort by identifying creative and innovative ways of expanding access to victim services and increasing service options available to crime victims so that they and their families can choose the services and support systems that best meet their needs. For instance, OVC's TeleSAFE program is expanding access to Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SANE) through telehealth technology. Victims in rural, tribal, and remote communities that lack SANE nurses will now have access to safe, trauma-informed examinations following an assault. OVC is also funding a national center for increasing access to victim services and compensation in areas that have been historically marginalized and adversely impacted by inequality.

Closer to home, *[list local organizations, programs, or resources that are improving victim access to services and victim service options]*.

The victims' rights movement that gained national attention with the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime and was strengthened by the CVRA transformed our criminal justice system by creating space for victims' voices. The success of the movement now will be judged by how closely we listen to victims' voices, both inside and outside the courtroom, and the doors we collectively open to help them find the justice they desperately seek.



# PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS



Broadcast media (radio and television) are required by the Federal Communications Commission to serve “the public interest.” Many stations donate portions of their commercial time to non-commercial causes and air community calendars with information about local events and activities. Public service announcements, or PSAs, are short video or audio messages that advertise a public service or event and are broadcast for free by radio or television stations.

To get a PSA broadcast on the air, contact your local radio or television stations about 2 months in advance to inquire about submission guidelines and the stations’ policies on airing PSAs. Find out who is in charge of selecting which PSAs will run. This person could be the public affairs director, traffic director, program director, promotions manager, or station manager. Be sure to include local cable (sometimes called “community access”) stations and college stations in your outreach.

Once you’ve made contact with the stations, inform them that you will be sending a PSA to air. Include basic information about your organization in the delivery, such as a cover letter and informational material. Follow up with a phone call to ask if the PSA was received and when it will be aired. Continue to reach out to the station—persistence is key.

## Sample 15-Second PSA

Every year, millions of Americans are affected by crime. April 24–30 is National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, a time to celebrate progress, raise awareness of victims’ rights and services, and stand with those whose lives have been forever altered.\* Call [organization name] at [phone number] to learn how you or someone you know can get the help they need.

## Sample 30-Second PSA

Every year, millions of Americans are affected by crime. Many will need ongoing care and resources. April 24–30 is National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, a time to celebrate the progress achieved, raise awareness of victims’ rights and services, and stand with our families, neighbors, friends, and colleagues whose lives have been forever altered by crime. You can help them find their justice by supporting the provision of rights, access, and equity for all victims. Call [organization name] at [phone number] to learn how you or someone you know can get the help they need.

## Sample 60-Second PSA

Every year, millions of Americans are affected by crime. Many will need ongoing care and resources. April 24–30 is National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, a time to celebrate the progress achieved, raise awareness of victims’ rights and services, and stand with our families, neighbors, friends, and colleagues whose lives have been forever altered by crime. We resolve to help them find their justice and forge new healing pathways. We commit to enforcing victims’ rights, expanding access to victim services, and providing equity and inclusion for all. This National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, show victims they are not alone.\* Call [organization name] at [phone number] to learn how you or someone you know can get the help they need.

### \*Alternate Ending

**You can also end each PSA with the following national helpline information:**

Call 855-4-VICTIM or visit [VictimConnect.org](https://VictimConnect.org) to learn about victims’ rights and options, confidentially and compassionately.



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# WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

NCVRW is a perfect opportunity to focus the media's attention on crime issues relevant to your local community. Research local crime victims' stories on the Internet and note which reporters cover these stories in your area. Find their contact information and follow those reporters on social media. Check with the news desk or outlet's website for the appropriate reporter's contact information.

## **Working With Reporters**

If your agency is holding a newsworthy event, either for NCVRW or at another time during the year, contact local reporters by phone and email and use social media to engage with reporters and send out invitations and alerts. Briefly describe the event and offer yourself as a resource.

Reporters are on tight deadlines, so any information that you can share ahead of time is useful and appreciated.

Reporters will often ask for a local or human-interest angle. Be prepared for the following types of questions when pitching your event:

- Has a local victim triumphed over tragedy or found a way to help other victims restore their lives? Are there victims who would be willing to share their story?
- Do you have a reliable source for up-to-date statistics on a particular type of crime? (Position your organization as a resource.)
- Have there been any other recent examples of the crime you are discussing in your area or in other communities around the country?
- Who could brief the reporter on the status of the law in this area?
- Can your organization's director provide an on-the-record comment?



# ADVOCATING WITH THE MEDIA

Media coverage of crime greatly influences public perceptions about victims. As reporters rush to meet deadlines, particularly in the immediate aftermath of crimes, their reporting may not reflect the desired sensitivity to traumatized victims. Because many reporters do not receive training about how to interact with victims, you have an opportunity to help them approach crime stories with sensitivity. As a victim advocate who understands the perspective of victims and knows what reporters need to include in their stories, you play a key role in advocating for victim-sensitive coverage of crime.

## Tips for Reporters

In writing news stories about crime, reporters have the difficult task of seeking interviews from victims and conducting those interviews in an ethical manner when victims agree to speak. Advocates can help reporters prepare to speak with victims by offering suggestions about how to approach victims so that they feel comfortable and safe. Educate reporters on how to address crime victims by sharing the following guidelines.<sup>7,8,9</sup>

### Asking for the Interview

- Recognize that victims may be coping with shock and trauma.
- Approach victims initially without equipment—notebooks, tape recorders, cameras, and lights—and try to make a human connection.

- Introduce yourself as a reporter, give the victims your name and title, and briefly explain what you hope to achieve with your story.
- Express concern for the victims by saying, “I am sorry for what happened to you” or “I am sorry for your loss.”
- Ask victims how they would prefer to be addressed, and observe that preference in all of your questions.
- Give victims a reason to speak with you by explaining the purpose of the story, the fact that it will be published, and why the victim’s participation is important.
- Tell the victims how much time you need and observe that time limit.
- Allow the victims to set whatever boundaries they need, and ensure they feel included and respected in every step of the process.
- Courteously accept the victims’ refusal if they are unwilling to be interviewed.
- If a victim declines, express interest in a future interview, leave a business card, or send an email with your contact information, and ask for the names of others who may be willing to speak.

### Logistics and Other Considerations

- Make the victim comfortable—offer a chair or suggest a comfortable, safe place to talk.

<sup>7</sup> Bonnie Bucqueroux and Anne Seymour, 2009, *A Guide for Journalists Who Report on Crime and Crime Victims*, Washington, DC: Justice Solutions. Retrieved December 27, 2021, from [www.mediacrimevictimguide.com/journalistguide.pdf](http://www.mediacrimevictimguide.com/journalistguide.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2020, *Addressing Domestic Violence in the Media: Resources for Reporters, Editors, and Media Professionals*, Washington, DC. Retrieved January 11, 2022, from <https://nnev.org/resources-library/addressing-domestic-violence-media-resources-reporters-editors-media-professionals/>.

<sup>9</sup> Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, 2015, *Working with Victims and Survivors: Minimise Further Harm*, New York, NY: Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. Retrieved January 11, 2022, from <https://dartcenter.org/content/working-with-victims-and-survivors-minimise-further-harm>.



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- Respect the victim’s space—because people experiencing trauma often do not want to be touched, hand the microphone to the victim and explain how to adjust it.
- Ask permission to record the interview.
- Clarify ground rules—explain that anything the victim says may be used in the interview.
- If the victims have asked to remain anonymous, thoroughly check your story for details that may allow someone to discover their identity. If the victims feel that publishing certain information could put their safety at risk, respect their right to omit that information or to pull their story altogether.
- Avoid filming or photographing the victim in a distressed or emotional state. Instead, choose powerful images that illustrate the victim’s resilience.

## Victim Advocacy During Interviews

With the help of victim advocates, reporters can approach the interview with sensitivity toward victims and the understanding that they may be undergoing trauma associated with the crime. Advocates who are present during the interview may step in if the reporter’s questions become too invasive or difficult or if the victims become upset. By making the victims’ needs a priority, advocates can keep the interview on track and encourage the reporter to do so as well.

### Tips for Victims

Advocating for victims with the media also includes helping victims decide whether to accept interviews, how to minimize invasions of their privacy, and how to exercise their rights and options in dealing with reporters. Advocates can also help victims anticipate questions and prepare how to answer them.

## Before the Interview

By giving victims the following checklist of questions and walking through it with them, you can help victims decide whether to participate in an interview.

- **What are your goals in speaking to the media?** What purpose do you hope the interview will serve? Will it help the community learn more about your loved one or understand the impact of crime on victims? Are you willing to answer questions from reporters who might not understand your pain or your point of view?
- **Would the interview invade your privacy?** If you are still struggling with the emotional, physical, or financial impact of the crime, would speaking to a reporter disturb you or violate your privacy? You may want to discuss the pros and cons with a victim advocate before making your decision.
- **Does refusing the interview increase or decrease your control over what is published about the crime?** Denying an interview will not prevent publicity about your case. If the story is newsworthy, the media will publish the story with or without interviewing you. Also, an interview may provide you with an opportunity to offer your perspective on the crime.
- **Would you prefer that someone else speak for you?** If you would rather not be interviewed, you may ask someone else—an attorney, a victim advocate, a clergy member, a family member, or a friend—to represent you in media interviews. That person can also release written statements on your behalf or accompany you to interviews if you decide to accept them.
- **Would granting an interview affect the investigation or prosecution of the crime?** Giving an interview may compromise the investigation or prosecution of a crime. You may want to speak with an advocate or an attorney before deciding to grant an interview.



- **Do you want to set conditions for the interview?**

Although reporters and producers may not agree to the conditions you suggest, they will most likely comply with reasonable requests if they want your interview. You have the right to ask or express your wishes regarding—

- o time and location of the interview;
- o visiting the set or location before an interview;
- o advance information about questions, the reporter's angle, or plans for using your interview;
- o requesting that a victim advocate, lawyer, or support person be present;
- o issues you will not discuss;
- o requesting a specific reporter or producer;
- o protecting your identity (through silhouettes and electronic distortion of your voice);
- o excluding children and other family members from the interview;
- o excluding photos and other images you find offensive; and
- o excluding offenders or other participants to whom you might object.

## Preparing Victims for the Interview

Share the following tips with victims who agree to interviews:

- Bring a trusted individual to provide support.

- Prepare for the interview by having an advocate list questions the reporter may ask and rehearsing responses.
- Refuse to answer a question by using the following tactics:
  - o Polite refusal: "I'm sorry, but I don't want to talk about that."
  - o Bridging, or changing the subject to what YOU want to talk about. Answer by saying, "What is really important about that issue is ..." and then talk about what you think the audience should know.
- Never speak "off the record." Reporters may publish or broadcast anything you say.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, simply say you don't know. Don't guess or speculate.
- You may request a correction if the article is inaccurate or you are quoted out of context. Newspapers and other outlets may publish corrections and television news may correct serious errors (although the option to do so is theirs). You can also contact management at the news outlet prior to publication or broadcast if the reporter was aggressive, insensitive, or obtained information dishonestly.
- You may refuse a follow-up interview, even if you have previously agreed to be interviewed a second time.

Victim advocates can play a key role in mediating between reporters and victims, especially when victims feel vulnerable and stressed. The victims, their families, and the wider community have an important interest in ensuring that media coverage is sensitive, accurate, and does not put victims under duress or at risk.



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