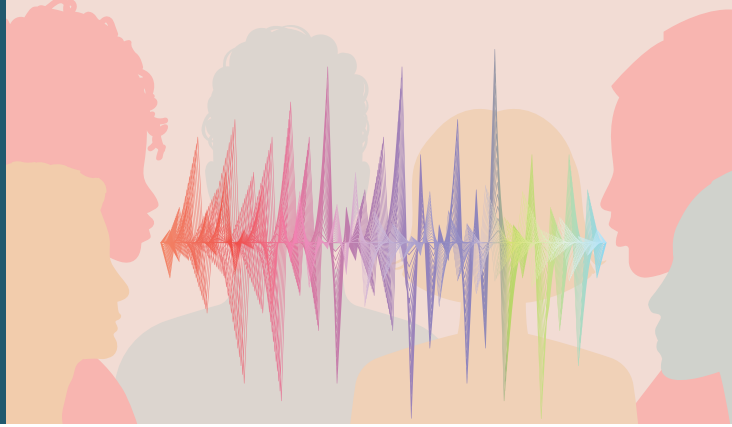


Resource Guide

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 create 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

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.

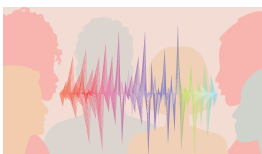
You can tailor the sample media plans described here to meet the needs and capacity of your organization, and to set media and outreach goals for the entire year. It can take as much (or as little) time as you have to dedicate to it.

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 #NCVRW2023 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 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 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.

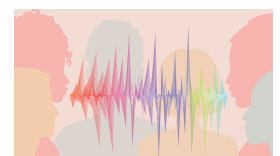
Set Achievable Goals

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.

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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 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, Survivor Voices: Engage. Elevate. Effect change.
- 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 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Candlelight Vigil.

- 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 2023 NCVRW Social Media Artwork was created specifically to be used with Facebook and Twitter. 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.

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking platform useful for sharing status updates, photos, videos and, more recently, Reels and Stories, similar to its sister platform, Instagram. From your personal Facebook account, you'll be able to establish a page specifically for your organization. Add a branded cover image with your organization's name and tagline and a profile image featuring your logo. Be sure to complete all fields within the "About" section to ensure that visitors can learn more about your organization at a glance. Post consistently, whether daily or weekly, and make sure your content provides some sort of value to your audience. Share relevant articles, blog posts, helpful resources, and infographics, and write engaging captions to encourage comments and shares.

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.

Twitter

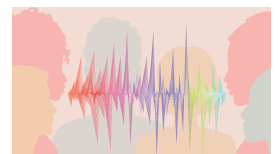
Twitter is a social networking platform useful for sharing breaking updates and adding short statements to the public conversation. You'll be able to directly create a page for your organization with its own login information. Twitter is closely monitored by journalists, so it can be used to respond to events in a timely manner or even provide real-time updates. Be sure to add a link to your website.

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.

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Many organizations already have a Facebook business or cause profile. Rather than opening a new page specific to a particular topic, use these established profiles 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-themed artwork sized specifically for sharing on Facebook, visit www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023/ncvrw-artwork/social-media-artwork. Be sure to use applicable hashtags and add #NCVRW2023 to your NCVRW posts.

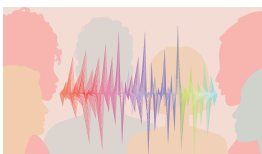
6 Tips for an Effective Facebook Post

- 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 of April 23–29, 2023

- This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week will be observed April 23-29, 2023. Join this week long initiative that calls upon communities to amplify the voices of survivors and commit to creating an environment where survivors have the confidence that they will be heard, believed, and supported. Get started by using the 2023 NCVRW Resource Guide. #NCVRW2023 www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Want to get involved in National Crime Victims' Rights Week? Access @OJPOVC's 2023 NCVRW Resource Guide to help plan and promote your community events between April 23–29, 2023. #NCVRW2023 www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme is Survivor Voices: Elevate, Engage, Effect Change. Use the hashtag #NCVRW 2023 to join the conversation and learn about available resources and community events during April 23–29, 2023. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- National Crime Victims' Rights Week begins Sunday, April 23, 2023. Visit the Office for Victims of Crime's #NCVRW2023 website to learn about available resources and ideas for events and activities. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- #NCVRW2023 is almost here! This year's theme is Survivor Voices: Elevate, Engage, Effect Change. Discover information about available resources and community events by visiting the 2023 NCVRW Resource Guide website. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023



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- During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we recognize the crime victim advocates, allied professionals, and selfless volunteers who continuously elevate and engage survivors to lift their voices, inform policy and practice, and thereby effect change. Learn more and get involved by visiting @OJPOVC's #NCVRW2023 Resource Guide. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023

During NCVRW

- This week is #NCVRW2023! Learn how you and your community can amplify the voices of survivors and commit to creating an environment where survivors have the confidence that they will be heard, believed, and supported. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Download the #NCVRW2023 artwork and sample proclamation to help raise awareness for National Crime Victims' Rights Week. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Use the @OJPOVC #NCVRW2023 Resource Guide to help elevate and engage survivor voices to effect change. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- During #NCVRW2023, visit 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 #NCVRW2023
- Did you know that victims' rights may vary by state? Visit victimlaw.org today to research state, federal or tribal law. #NCVRW2023

- Support is available for victims of crime. Call 855-4-VICTIM to learn about victims' rights and options, confidentially and compassionately. victimconnect.org. #NCVRW2023
- During #NCVRW2023 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 elevate survivor voices, engage survivor voices and effect change. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- 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 #NCVRW2023

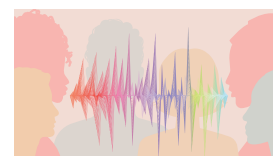
Tech Tip

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 #NCVRW2023 to your NCVRW tweets.

Five Tips for Tweeting

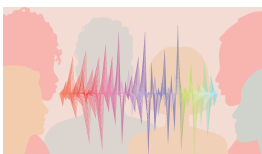
New users of Twitter may have difficulty adhering to a character limit. Use the tips below to make your tweets more concise:

- 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. You can also consider using a link-shortening tool to make long URLs fit into limited space.
- If you need additional characters or want to share longer-form content, you can “thread” tweets together.

Sample Tweets

Leading up to NCVRW

- This year’s National Crime Victims’ Rights Week theme is Survivor Voices: Elevate. Engage. Effect Change. Join us during this week long initiative from April 23- 29, 2023. #NCVRW2023 #victimservices www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Want to get involved in #NCVRW2023? Use @OJPOVC’s 2023 NCVRW Resource Guide to plan and promote your community events from April 23 to 29, 2023. #supportvictims www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Join the conversation! Use the hashtag #NCVRW2023 to learn about available resources and community events happening April 23–29, 2023. #victimservices #victimsrights
- National Crime Victims’ Rights Week is almost here! Follow #NCVRW2023 to stay connected and find compelling artwork and resources to elevate survivor voices, engage survivor voices and effect change at www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023.
- Visit @OJPOVC’s #NCVRW2023 Resource Guide at www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023 for ideas to observe National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. #NCVRW2023 #victimservices
- National Crime Victims’ Rights Week begins Sunday, April 23, 2023. Visit www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023 for information about resources, events and activities.
- Need inspiration for your #NCVRW2023 event? See the 2023 NCVRW Resource Guide for helpful tips on how to amplify the voices of survivors and commit to creating an environment where survivors are confident they will be heard, believed and supported. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Plan your yearly efforts to help honor victims of crime in your community with the #NCVRW2023 Commemorative Calendar of crime victim-related observances at www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023.



Survivor Voices

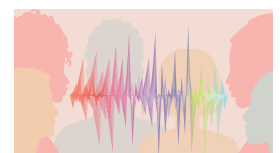
Elevate. Engage. Effect Change.

During NCVRW

- #NCVRW2023 starts today! Discover resources at www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023 to learn how you and your community can help promote awareness
- It's National Crime Victims' Rights Week! Let's commit to creating an environment where survivor voices are heard, believed and supported. #NCVRW2023
- #NCVRW2023 starts today! Discover resources at www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023 to learn how you and your community can help elevate and engage survivor voices, to effect change. #NCVRW2023 www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Join the nationwide observation of #NCVRW2023 this week and elevate and engage survivors to lift their voices, inform policy and practice, and thereby effect change #victimservices #victimsrights www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Access @OJPOVC's #NCVRW2023 Resource Guide to learn about this year's theme of Survivor Voices: Elevate, Engage and Effect change. #victimservices www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Have you or someone you know been a victim of crime? The @OJPOVC #NCVRW2023 Referral Flier lists national resources that can offer support. www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- Use @OJPOVC's searchable database of victims' rights at www.victimlaw.org to research state, federal, and Tribal laws. #NCVRW2023 #victimservices
- #NCVRW2023 starts today! Discover resources at www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023 to learn how you and your community can help promote awareness.
- Visit www.ovcttac.gov for the tools and resources you need to help you and your community promote awareness of the needs of crime victims. #NCVRW2023
- We can work together to elevate and engage survivors to lift their voices, inform policy and practice, and thereby effect change survivor voices. Start your #NCVRW2023 activities with the proclamation at www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023.
- Support is available for victims of crime. Call 855-4-VICTIM confidentially to learn about victims' rights and options. victimconnect.org #NCVRW2023 #victimservices #victimsrights
- During #NCVRW2023 and throughout the year, we want to let victims of crime know that they are not alone. Find helpful tools to elevate and engage survivors to lift their voices, inform policy and practice, and thereby effect change www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023
- The Tribal Resource Tool is a searchable directory of services for AI/AN survivors of crime and abuse in Indian Country. The tool includes services for all ages of survivors and victims. Connect now. tribalresourcetool.org #NCVRW2023 #victimsrights #victimservices

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Blog

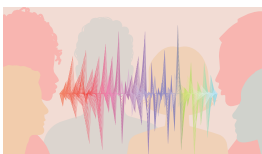
Consider sharing more in-depth messages with your community online through a blog. Post as frequently as you wish, with a goal of at least once a month. Be sure to provide a link to your blog on your Facebook, Twitter and other social media pages.

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.

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

Online harassment and abuse may be more common than you think.

Modern communication technology has brought us closer together. We can instantly look up information and connect with loved ones and people across the world. But with those benefits comes an unfortunate truth: People use the same technology that connects us to engage in unwelcome communication and criminal behavior.

The startling truth is this: 33% of U.S. women and 11% of U.S. men under age 35 report being sexually harassed online, according to the Pew Research Center's "The State of Online Harassment" [report](#), published in 2021. Sixty-six percent of LGBTQ+ internet users report being harassed online, with 54% reporting severe harassment, according to the Anti-Defamation League's 2022 survey "Online Hate and Harassment: The American Experience."

According to Pew, as many as 41% of Americans have experienced some form of online harassment. And 25% of those responding to Pew's survey, conducted in 2020, reported experiencing severe online harassment, such as physical threats or cyberstalking.

[Insert any local statistics here.]

Online abuse and harassment can take many forms, including cyberstalking, publishing someone's private information with ill intent (doxing), sextortion, threats of sexual violence and other harm, distributing intimate images online without consent, intimate partner abuse through communication devices and more. While most online harassment occurs on social media, it can also involve texting or messaging apps, email, gaming platforms, dating apps and forum or discussion sites, according to Pew.

In June 2022, the Biden administration established the [White House Task Force to Address Online Abuse](#) to make recommendations about how to address online gender-based violence. At an October 2022 roundtable convened by the White House Gender Policy Council, Domestic Policy Council and the Department of Education, youth survivors of online abuse shared their experiences and offered recommendations to the Task Force to Address Online Harassment and Abuse. Survivors emphasized how online abuse created severe mental health impacts and physical harm. Other impacts discussed include the lasting effects, well into adulthood, of child sexual exploitation online, and increasing teenage suicide rates.

We must continue to support victims, hear their concerns and connect them with appropriate resources. The [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#) offers guides on how to report social media abuse, protect yourself digitally from stalkers, attempt to remove non-consensual images from the internet, mitigate harassment and more.

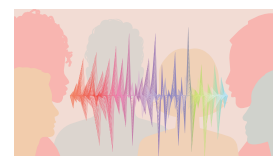
[Insert local organizations, law enforcement agencies and other sources of assistance and support here.]

To be heard is important. To be listened to fully is an imperative. To take action is a must.

Survivor Voices: Elevate. Engage. Effect Change.

Survivor Voices

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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, customize your channel URL 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.

Keep branding cohesive through use of channel banner images (specs) and recognizable, branded video thumbnails (specs).

Instagram

Instagram is a photo- and video-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 the accounts of relevant individuals or organizations, adding keywords to your captions and using relevant hashtags. Be sure to add #NCVRW2023 to relevant posts.

Instagram also has a Stories feature that allows users to post a series of photos and short videos that disappear after 24 hours. Stories are a great tool for polling your audience and increasing engagement through interactive Q&A “stickers” as you can share these responses on your Instagram Story. Stories are also an effective way to drive traffic to any link you choose, whether that’s an event registration, a resource, or an article. Stories can be archived after 24 hours and repurposed using the

Highlights feature, which visitors can see on your profile. Instagram has also recently added the Reels feature for longer videos that can be posted directly to your feed along with photos. Both Stories and Reels allow for hashtags and tags, just like static images. Instagram images cannot include clickable links (although Stories can), so it is best to use a link-shortening service like Bitly to create a user-friendly url to paste into your image captions. You can also use a service such as LinkTree or Linkin.bio in your page bio to direct users to specific links relevant to the posts you share. Instagram interfaces with Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms.

LinkedIn

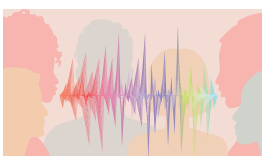
LinkedIn is a professional network for individuals and organizations. To create a LinkedIn company page for your organization, follow the “setup wizard” to complete a company profile. Be sure to include header and profile images, keeping cohesive branding in mind, and focus on keywords from your mission 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 #NCVRW2023 and the customizable NCVRW theme artwork available at www.ovc.ojp.gov/ncvrw2023.



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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.

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.
- 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

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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.



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Sample Press Release

[Your city/organization] commemorates **National Crime Victims' Rights Week April 23–29, 2023**

[City, State] — *[Organization's name]* is commemorating National Crime Victims' Rights Week from April 23–29, 2023 by hosting *[list special events or activities]*.

According to a **report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics**, in 2021, there were more than 4.6 million violent victimizations and 11.7 million property crimes, the latest year for which such information is available. *[Insert any relevant local statistics here.]*

[Insert a quote from the leader of your organization or another appropriate representative about the need for listening to victims and supporting them at every step of the criminal justice process and beyond.]

The federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) leads communities throughout the country in their annual observances of National Crime Victims' Rights Week by raising awareness of victims' rights and honoring crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. This year's theme is **"Survivor Voices: Elevate. Engage. Effect Change."** Partner organizations are committed to engaging with victims of crime; learning from their lived experiences; amplifying their voices; and fostering an environment where they are heard, believed, and supported.

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

During NCVRW 2023, *[Your city/organization]* will share information about victims' rights and resources and underscore the importance of listening to survivors' voices in every space where decisions are made that could impact them 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.

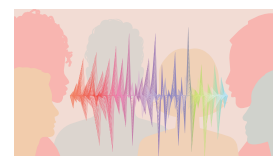
We encourage participation in the week's virtual and in-person events. Members of the media are invited to cover *[insert your local organization's events]*. Interviews can also be arranged ahead of time. Contact *[insert media contact information]*.

For additional information about this year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week and how to assist crime victims, please contact *[organization]* at *[telephone number]* or visit *[organization]'s* website at *[web address]*. For more information about how to support all victims of crime, visit OVC's website at [ovc.ojp.gov](https://www.ovc.ojp.gov).

###

[Your organization's mission statement/boilerplate]

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Letter to the Editor

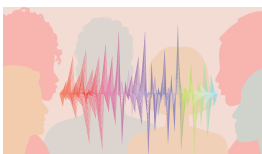
Readers' letters and comments are often the most-read sections of newspapers and news websites. They are great tools for building awareness about NCVRW. By writing a letter to the editor, you can link NCVRW or one of your organization's programs to a current local, state, or national issue by showing 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.

In fact, consider doing all of those outlets from the start. Tweak the language to make it the most relevant possible for each outlet where you seek publication.

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 200 to 250 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.



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Sample Letter to the Editor (223 words)

To the editor:

News coverage of crime is commonplace. Almost daily, stories about crime are front and center in newspapers, online media and television. While it's true that crime affects us all on a societal level, what's often lost in such coverage is the severe impact crime has on victims and their loved ones.

It's important that we not only hear the voices of survivors but that survivors are listened to and engaged with at every level of the criminal justice process.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week, which runs April 23-29, is the perfect time to learn more about why the voices and needs of victims should be centered in every step of the criminal justice process and how we can all work together to create a world in which survivors are believed and supported.

It's also crucial that victims are connected with appropriate resources and support. We would ask that your outlet make it standard to report information about how survivors can access resources. Locally, *[insert at least two local support organizations/services]* are available to help.

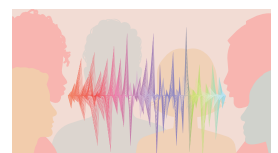
We encourage community leaders to reach out to us for resources about how to effectively and meaningfully engage with survivors and to learn more about why learning from their lived experiences is vital. To get involved, *[insert call to action: connect with organization by phone, email, website or reach out to local law enforcement agency/other organization]*.

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With regards,

(Signature)

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Opinion-Editorial

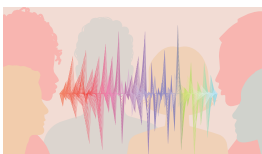


Newspaper editorial pages — both in print and online — are highly popular among readers. Opinion-editorials (op-eds) are longer than letters to the editor and afford the opportunity to delve more deeply into issues. An op-ed is your chance to influence opinions, affect policy, and highlight the work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



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Sample Op-Ed (570 words)

Hate crimes loom forebodingly over American discourse — grim blemishes on our national identity that remind us all of how far we have left to go. Each year, there are new stories of mass shootings carried out by adherents of hate-fueled ideologies and of smaller acts of bias-based intimidation and violence.

Such acts harm entire communities and instill fear on a massive scale, but it's imperative to remember that the people most harmed by hate crimes are victims, survivors and their families. Their voices, their stories and their desires for justice cannot be excluded from any conversation about the impact of hate crimes.

The FBI's most recent annual [report](#) on hate crimes, which covers 2021, shows that over 7,200 hate crimes involving more than 9,000 victims were reported by U.S. law enforcement agencies that year alone. Those victims, survivors and their family members aren't statistics. They're real people with voices that need to be heard.

It's important to note that the numbers listed above are not exhaustive; not every law enforcement agency provides data on bias-motivated incidents to the FBI. Furthermore, not every victim of a hate crime reports it, and not every state classifies hate crimes the same way. In fact, some states don't even have hate crimes laws on the books at all.

About 65% of reported victims of hate crime in 2021 were targeted because of race, ethnicity or ancestry. In nearly 20% of single-bias incidents, victims were targeted because of their sexual orientation or gender. In about 14% of the crimes, people were targeted because of their religious beliefs, and nearly 2% of people victimized by hate crimes were targeted because of disabilities.

[Insert any local statistics here.]

During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we join with many other advocates, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, health care professionals and others dedicated to being catalysts for change in our commitment to listen survivors and honor them by working toward meaningful change.

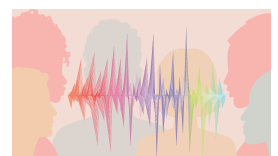
"For too long, the victims of crime have been the forgotten persons of our criminal justice system," President Ronald Reagan said when he signed the proclamation establishing the inaugural Crime Victims' Rights Week in 1981. "Rarely do we give victims the help they need or the attention they deserve."

While the victims' rights movement has made great strides since then, there is still much work to be done. *[Include a sentence about what your organization/agency does in this field or is planning for the next year.]*

This year, for National Crime Victims' Rights week, we commit to engaging with survivors and amplifying their voices as we push for change. *[Briefly list any local observance of NCVRW people can attend and/or how they can get resources or volunteer to help with your organization.]*

Let's work together to create an environment where survivors are confident they'll be heard, believed and supported — and a nation where no one will live in fear of being targeted because of who they are or how they worship.

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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 23–29 is National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, a week long initiative that calls upon communities to amplify the voices of survivors. Call [organization name] at [phone number] to learn how you can help make certain survivors voices are heard and acted upon.

Sample 30-Second PSA

Every year, millions of Americans are affected by crime. Many will need ongoing care, support, and resources. April 23–29 is National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, a time to amplify the voices of survivors and commit to creating an environment where survivors have the confidence that they will be heard, believed and supported. Call [organization name] at [phone number] to learn how you can help make certain survivors voices are heard and acted upon.

Sample 60-Second PSA

Every year, millions of Americans are affected by crime. Many will need ongoing care, support, and resources. April 23–29 is National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, a time to amplify the voices of survivors and commit to creating an environment where survivors have the confidence that they will be heard, believed and supported. Let’s stand with 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. This National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, show survivors that they are not alone. Call [organization name] at [phone number] to learn how you can help make certain survivors voices are heard and acted upon.



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Working With The Media

NCVCRW 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 NCVCRW 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.

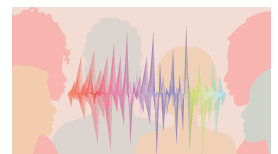
Reporters are on tight deadlines, so any information that you can share ahead of time is useful and appreciated.

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?

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Advocating With The Media

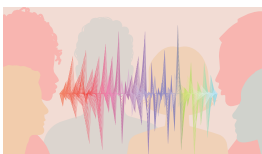
Media coverage of crime greatly influences public perceptions about victims. As reporters rush to meet deadlines, particularly in the immediate aftermath of crimes, their reporting may not reflect the desired sensitivity to traumatized victims. Because many reporters do not receive training about how 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.

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.



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Logistics and Other Considerations

- Make the victim comfortable—offer a chair or suggest a comfortable, safe place to talk.
- 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. If victims do not want media attention, advise them to change privacy settings on their social media accounts or even consider putting a notice on their door indicating that they do not wish to be disturbed.

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.

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- 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:

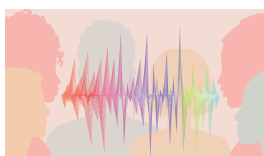
- time and location of the interview;
- visiting the set or location before an interview;
- advance information about questions, the reporter's angle, or plans for using your interview;
- requesting that a victim advocate, lawyer, or support person be present;
- issues you will not discuss;
- requesting a specific reporter or producer;
- protecting your identity (through silhouettes and electronic distortion of your voice);
- excluding children and other family members from the interview;
- excluding photos and other images you find offensive; and
- 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:
 - » Polite refusal: "I'm sorry, but I don't want to talk about that."
 - » 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.
- If the reporter did not ask a question that you feel they should have, tell them at the end of the interview that you have something important you'd like to add and offer that information.
- 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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How to Organize a Press Conference

If the victim is feeling overwhelmed by media requests but still feels there is value in speaking, consider organizing a press conference so that they can provide their information only one time. The press conference can be recorded, if agreed upon by the victim, and shared on social media so reporters can access it in the future without further disturbing the victim.

- It may be helpful to arrange for several speakers so that the victim is not alone; attorneys, law enforcement working with the victim, faith leaders, advocates and other family members and friends are all good choices.
- Be sure to have a designated person to open the press conference and introduce speakers and establish ground rules, such as whether the victim will or will not accept follow-up questions after reading a statement. This is also a good opportunity to outline what questions will not be answered at all.
- Be sure to send the invitation via email to interested news outlets. If you need help with those contacts, consider reaching out to the public information office at the appropriate law enforcement agency as they will likely be able to share contact information with you.
- Rehearse the order of speakers in advance and practice answering anticipated questions.
- Make sure there is enough room for everyone, especially if you anticipate TV news crews that will need to place cameras.
- It is best to provide some written facts in a press packet to reporters, as this will help ensure accurate information is reported and cut down on follow-up requests. If you include visuals, they should not be exploitive or retraumatizing to the individual (i.e., crime scene photos, photos of the victim in the aftermath of the crime, etc.).

Footnotes

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