

Opinion-Editorial

Newspaper editorial pages—both in print and online—are a go-to for newspaper editorial pages, both print and online, attracting many readers. Op-eds, longer than letters to the editor, allow you to dive deeper into important issues. One way to develop an op-ed is to research local crime coverage and essential issues in your community. For example, does your community offer services for victims of human trafficking? How would a law enforcement and victim service agencies partnership 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

1. Be persuasive. Include the latest research and structure a logical argument or rationale.
2. Be confident. You are the expert in this field.
3. Please stay updated on related events and the cultural conversations about them.
4. Use plain language that a broad audience can understand.
5. Keep your submission to 800 words or less.

Sample Op-Ed (450 words)

Survivors of crime often face their healing journeys without support. Many never report the crime or seek help for various reasons, including fear or uncertainty about where to turn. However, connection can be a powerful force for victims trying to regain a sense of control over their lives.

In 2023, there were 6.4 million violent victimizations of persons age 12 or older and 13.6 million property victimizations, according to the [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#). These numbers reflect the vast impact of crime, yet they don't account for the many survivors who remain unheard and unsupported.

After a crime, many survivors feel isolated and unsure of where to turn. But healing often begins with connection. When survivors can talk to someone who truly understands, it can be the first step toward regaining their strength and sense of safety. That's why the concept of peer support — long a success story in recovery settings — is starting to gain traction in victim services.

Peer support groups bring together people who have experienced similar challenges, creating a space where survivors can share their stories, exchange advice, and support one another. These groups are usually led by facilitators — sometimes survivors themselves — who help guide discussions in a way that fosters connection, validation, and healing. That's distinct from traditional therapy, which is typically facilitated by a mental health professional.

Peer support groups focus on shared experiences and mutual encouragement. Whether held in person or online, these groups may provide a sense of community that can be difficult to find elsewhere.

This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme, "Connecting <KINSHIP> Healing," emphasizes the power of our shared humanity.

Even small gestures can be life-changing for someone on their healing journey. And if you are a survivor, it could mean reaching out to a community that understands — or offering your support to someone who's currently going through what may be the most difficult time of their life.

[Insert relevant local peer support resources or survivor-led initiatives here.]

What are some simple actions that you can take to stand in kinship with crime survivors? Learn about the trauma-informed services in your area. You never know when a colleague, neighbor or family member might need that lifeline.

[Insert any local statistics or information about how your organization can help here.]

Healing looks different for everyone, but it begins with knowing support is available. This National Crime Victims' Rights Week, let's stand together in kinship, ensuring every survivor has a place to turn.