

A Toolkit for Working with the Media



WEST VIRGINIA FOUNDATION for RAPE
INFORMATION and SERVICES
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Media Advocacy

Media advocacy can promote social change by influencing decision-makers and swaying public opinion. Organizations can use mass media outlets to change social conditions and encourage political and social intervention. When working with the media, advocates should ‘shape’ their story to incorporate social themes rather than solely focusing on individual accountability. “Develop a story that personalizes the injustice and then provide a clear picture of who is benefiting from the condition.” (Wallack et al., 1999) Merely stating that there is a problem provides no ‘call to action’ for the public. Therefore, advocates should identify a specific solution that would allow communities to take control of the issue. Sexual violence is a public health concern of social injustices.

- **Effective Media Campaigns**

Local, regional or statewide campaigns can provide a forum for prevention, outreach and raising awareness to create social change. This toolkit will enhance advocates’ abilities to utilize the media for campaigns and other events. Campaigns can include: public service announcements (PSAs), awareness events (Take Back the Night; The Clothesline Project), media interviews, coordinated events at area schools or college campuses, position papers, etc. Effective campaigns require planning, communication, broad-based support and collaborative efforts. It is important to develop a strategy and devise a plan to meet identified outcomes. Consider:

- Geographic location you intend to reach.
- Do you have a target population?
- What is the focus of your campaign?
- Where can you make a real impact and who should be involved?
- Who has the necessary experience?
- Who are key stakeholders?

Building a Relationship with the Media

When building a relationship with the media it is important to know your media sources. Identify local publications, read printed material and watch the local news. Find out who is covering issues similar to yours and become familiar with their writing style. Take note of which reporters do a good job.

Monitoring the Media

- Is your issue being covered? If not, are other related issues being covered?
- What are the main arguments or themes of each side?
- Who’s reporting on sexual assault or other types of injustice?
- Is anyone responding or representing on the issue? If so, what are they saying?
- What aspects could improve your cause?
- What other angles (perspectives) are there?
- What’s missing?

In order to establish a relationship you must first develop a list of contacts. Get to know the reporters, stay connected, and nurture the relationships. Know and respect deadlines and determine the best course of action for delivering newsworthy releases.

- **Developing a media list**

Once you have identified and monitored local media sources, develop a media contact list and continue to update your list as you gain new contacts. Your list should include: Station or publication and physical location, contact name, title, phone/fax number, email and web address. Check the source for contact information or look on the web. If it is unclear who you should contact, call the news outlet and ask who covers your issue.

For a list of local media outlets you can visit <http://www.usnpl.com/>. The following lists were current at the time this document was created.

Consider tracking your contacts: interviews, telephone calls, news releases, meetings, etc.

Television News Stations in West Virginia

Area Served	City of License	Virtual Channel	Physical RF Channel	Call Sign	Network
Beckley/Bluefield	Oak Hill	4	50	WOAY-TV	ABC
Beckley/Bluefield	Bluefield	6	46	WVVA	NBC
Beckley/Bluefield	Grandview	9	10	WSWP-TV	PBS
Beckley/Bluefield	Bluefield	40	40	WLFB	Ind.
Beckley/Bluefield	Lewisburg	59	8	WVNS-TV	CBS
Charleston/Huntington	Huntington	3	23	WSAZ-TV	NBC
Charleston/Huntington	Charleston	8	41	WCHS-TV	ABC
Charleston/Huntington	Charleston	11	19	WVAH-TV	Fox
Charleston/Huntington	Huntington	13	13	WOWK-TV	CBS
Charleston/Huntington	Charleston	29	39	WLPX-TV	ION
Charleston/Huntington	Portsmouth, OH	30	17	WQCW	CW
Charleston/Huntington	Huntington	33	34	WPBY-TV	PBS
Charleston/Huntington	Ashland, KY	61	44	WTSF	DTN
Clarksburg	Clarksburg	12	12	WBOY-TV	NBC
Clarksburg	Weston	5	5	WDTV	CBS
Clarksburg	Morgantown	24	33	WNPB-TV	PBS
Clarksburg	Clarksburg	10	10	WVFX	Fox
Martinsburg	Martinsburg	60	12	WWPX-TV	ION
Parkersburg	Parkersburg	15	49	WTAP-TV	NBC
Wheeling	Wheeling	7	7	WTRF-TV	CBS
Wheeling	Steubenville, OH	9	9	WTOV-TV	NBC

West Virginia Newspapers

Area	Title	Address	Phone/Fax	Editor/Publisher
Beckley	The Register-Herald	PO Box 2398 Beckley, WV 25802	P: 304-255-4400 F: 304-256-5625	Butch Antolini
Berkeley Springs	The Morgan Messenger	16 North Mercer St. Berkeley Springs, WV 25411	P: 304-258-1800 F: 304-258-8441	John Douglas
Bluefield	Bluefield Daily Telegraph	928 Bluefield Ave. Bluefield, WV 24701	P: 304-327-2811 F: 304-327-6179	Samantha Perry
Bluefield	Bluefieldnews.net	PO Box 1172 Huntington, WV 25714	P: 304-654-0087 F: 304-697-8487	David Kinchen
Charleston	Charleston Daily Mail	1001 Virginia St. East Charleston, WV 25301	P: 304-348-1231 F: 304-348-4847	Nancy Friend
Charleston	Charleston Gazette	1001 Virginia St. East Charleston, WV 25301	P: 800-982-6397 F: 304-348-1233	James Haught
Charleston	The State Journal	13 Kanawha Blvd. West #100 Charleston, WV 25302	P: 304-344-16301	Dan Page
Clarksburg	Exponent Telegram	PO Box 2000 Clarksburg, WV 26302	P: 304-626-1400 F: 304-624-4188	William Highland
Culloden	The Cabell Standard	PO Box 186 Culloden, WV 25510	P: 304-743-6731	Jack Bailey
Elkins	The Inter-Mountain	PO Box 1339 Elkins, WV 26241	P: 304-636-2121 F: 304-636-8252	Linda Skidmore
Fairmont	Times West Virginian	PO Box 2530 Fairmont, WV 26554	P: 304-367-2500 F: 304-367-2569	Misty Poe
Grafton	Mountain Statesman	914 West Main St. Grafton, WV 26354	P: 304-265-3333 F: 304-265-3342	Matthew Trout
Grantsville	The Calhoun Chronicle	PO Box 400 Grantsville, WV 26147	P: 304-354-6672	Newton Nichols
Hamlin	Lincoln Journal	PO Box 308 Hamlin, WV 25523	P: 304-824-5101 F: 304-824-5210	Sean O
Huntington	HuntingtonNews.Net	945 4 th Ave. Huntington, WV 25701	P: 304-654-0087 F: 304-697-8487	David Kinchen
Huntington	The Herald-Dispatch	PO Box 2017 Huntington, WV 25720	P: 304-526-4000 F: 304-526-2857	Ed Dawson
Keyser	Daily News-Tribune	24 Armstrong St. Keyser, WV 26726	P: 304-788-3333	Liz Beavers
Lewisburg	Mountain Messenger	122 North Court St. Lewisburg, WV 24901	P: 304-647-5724 F: 304-647-5767	
Logan	Logan Banner	PO Box 720 Logan, WV 25601	P: 304-752-6950 F: 304-752-1239	Michael Browning
Madison	Coal Valley News	350 Main St. Madison, WV 25130	P: 304-369-1165 F: 304-369-1166	Fred Pace
Marlinton	The Pocahontas Times	206 Eighth St. Marlinton, WV 24954	P: 304-799-4973 F: 304-799-6466	Pamela Pritt
Martinsburg	The Journal	PO Box 807 Martinsburg, WV 25402	P: 304-263-8931 F: 304-267-2903	Don Smith

Area	Title	Address	Phone/Fax	Editor/Publisher
Moorefield	The Moorefield Examiner	PO Box 380 Moorefield, WV 26836	P: 304-530-6397 F: 304-530-6400	Phoebe Fisher Heishman
Morgantown	The Dominion Post	1251 Earl L Core Rd. Morgantown, WV 26505	P: 304-291-9425 F: 304-291-2326	Geri Ferrara
Parkersburg	News and Sentinel	519 Juliana St. Parkersburg, WV 26101	P: 304-485-1897	Paul Lapann
Petersburg	Grant County Press	PO Box 39 Petersburg, WV 26847	P: 304-257-1844 F: 304-257-1691	Bill Fouch
Point Pleasant	Point Pleasant Register	200 Main St. Point Pleasant, WV 25550	P: 304-675-1333	Pam Caldwell
Romney	Hampshire Review	PO Box 1036 Romney, WV 26757	P: 304-822-3871 F: 304-822-4487	Sallie See
Shepherdstown	Shepherdstown Observer	PO Box 3088 Shepherdstown, WV 25443	P: 304-876-2414 F: 304-876-2426	David Lillard
Spencer	The Times Record	210 E. Main St. Spencer, WV 25276	P: 304-927-2360 F: 304-927-2361	Jim Cooper
Sutton	Braxton Citizens' News	PO Box 516 Sutton, WV 26601	P: 304-765-5193 F: 304-765-2754	Ed Given
Wayne	Wayne County News	310 Central Ave. Wayne, WV 25570	P: 304-272-3433 F: 304-272-6516	Rob Robinson
Weirton	The Weirton Daily Times	PO Box 2830 Weirton, WV 26062	P: 304-748-0606 F: 740-284-7355	Craig Howell
Weston	Weston Democrat	306 Main Ave. Weston, WV 26452	P: 304-269-1600 F: 304-269-4035	Robert Billeter
Wheeling	Wheeling News-Register	1500 Main St. Wheeling, WV 26003	P: 304-233-0100 F: 304-233-1399	Mike Myer
Williamson	Williamson Daily News	100 Block E. 3 rd Ave. Williamson, WV 25661	P: 304-235-4242 F: 304-235-0730	D. Gaither Perry
Winfield	The Putnam Standard	PO Box 186 Culloden, WV 25510	P: 304-743-1222	Jack Bailey
Marshall University	The Parthenon	109 Communications Bldg. 1 John Marshall Dr. Huntington, WV 25755	P: 304-696-6696 F: 304-696-2732 Parthenon@marshall.edu www.marshallparthenon.com	
Shepherd College	The Picket	PO Box 5000 Shepherdstown, WV 25443	P: 304-876-5377 pickweb@shepherd.edu www.picketonline.com	
West Virginia University	The Daily Athenaeum		P: 304-293-5092 DAnewsroom@mail.wvu.edu www.thedaonline.com	

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Radio Stations in West Virginia

Call sign	Frequency	City of License	Licensee	Format
WFGM	93.1 FM	Barrackville	AJG Corporation	Classic Top 40
WCIR-FM	103.7 FM	Beckley	Southern Communications Corporation	Contemporary Hit Radio
WJJJ	88.1 FM	Beckley	Shofar Broadcasting Corporation	Religious
WJLS-FM	99.5 FM	Beckley	First Media Radio, LLC	Country
WVPB	91.7 FM	Beckley	West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority	Public Radio
WVJW-LP	94.1 FM	Benwood	Kol Ami Havurah	Neo-Victorian
WDHC	92.9 FM	Berkeley Springs	Capper Broadcasting Company	Country
WDTF-LP	107.9 FM	Berkeley Springs	Defenders of the Faith, Inc.	Catholic Religious
WVBC	88.1 FM	Bethany	Bethany College	Adult Album Alternative
WUKL	105.5 FM	Bethlehem	Keymarket Licenses, LLC	Oldies
WPJY	88.7 FM	Blennerhassett	Positive Alternative Radio Inc.	Southern Gospel
WHAJ	104.5 FM	Bluefield	Monterey Licenses, LLC	Hot Adult Contemporary
WPIB	91.1 FM	Bluefield	Positive Alternative Radio, Inc.	Contemporary Christian
WETT	104.1 FM	Bridgeport	Withers Broadcasting Company of Bridgeport, LLC	Light Adult Contemporary
WBRB	101.3 FM	Buckhannon	WV Radio Corporation of Buckhannon	Country
WBTQ	93.5 FM	Buckhannon	West Virginia Radio Corporation of Elkins	Hot Adult Contemporary
WVPW	88.9 FM	Buckhannon	West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority	Public Radio
WVWC	92.1 FM	Buckhannon	West Virginia Wesleyan College	Adult Album Alternative
WKWS	96.1 FM	Charleston	West Virginia Radio Corporation of Charleston	Country
WQBE-FM	97.5 FM	Charleston	Bristol Broadcasting Company, Inc.	Country
WVAF	99.9 FM	Charleston	West Virginia Radio Corporation of Charleston	Light Adult Contemporary
WVPN	88.5 FM	Charleston	West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority	Public Radio
WVSR-FM	102.7 FM	Charleston	Bristol Broadcasting Company, Inc.	Hot Adult Contemporary
WXAF	90.9 FM	Charleston	Shofar Broadcasting Corporation	Southern Gospel
WGIE	92.7 FM	Clarksburg	Burbach of DE, LLC	Country
WPDY-FM	104.9 FM	Clarksburg	Tschudy Broadcasting Corp.	Classic Country
WWLW	106.5 FM	Clarksburg	West Virginia Radio Corporation of Clarksburg	Adult Contemporary
WYAP-LP	101.7 FM	Clay	Clay County Communications, Ltd.	Variety/Talk
WKQV	105.5 FM	Cowen	Summit Media Broadcasting, LLC	Active Rock
WSWW-FM	95.7 FM	Craigsville	West Virginia Radio Corporation of Charleston	Full Service
WZAC-FM	92.5 FM	Danville	Price Broadcasting Company	Classic Country
WVTS-FM	94.5 FM	Dunbar	Bristol Broadcasting Company, Inc.	
WQAZ-LP	98.5 FM	Edmond	The Syner Foundation	Oldies/Adult Standards
WRZZ	106.1 FM	Elizabeth	Burbach of DE, LLC	Classic Rock
WXIL	95.1 FM	Elizabeth	Burbach of DE, LLC	Contemporary Hit Radio
WBHZ	91.9 FM	Elkins	American Family Association	Contemporary Christian
WCDE	90.3 FM	Elkins	Board of Trustees, Davis & Elkins College	Variety
WDNE-FM	98.9 FM	Elkins	West Virginia Radio Corporation of Elkins	Country
WELK	94.7 FM	Elkins	West Virginia Radio Corporation of Elkins	Oldies
WBWG-LP	99.1 FM	Fairmont	God's Word Broadcasting, Inc.	Religious
WKKW	97.9 FM	Fairmont	AJG Corporation	Country
WRLF	94.3 FM	Fairmont	Fairmont Broadcasting Company	Album Oriented Rock
WVBD	100.7 FM	Fayetteville	Summit Media South, Inc.	Classic Country

Call sign	Frequency	City of License	Licensee	Format
WQWV	103.7 FM	Fisher	McGuire Broadcasting, LLC	Country
WFGH	90.7 FM	Fort Gay	Wayne County Board of Education	Variety
WHQX	107.7 FM	Gary	Monterey Licenses, LLC	Country
WVRW	107.7 FM	Glenville	Della Jane Woofter	Oldies/Classic Rock
WDKL	95.9 FM	Grafton	Educational Media Foundation	Contemporary Christian/Religious
WVMR	91.9 FM	Hillsboro	Pocahontas Communications Cooperative Corp.	Full Service/Freeform
WMTD	102.3 FM	Hinton	Southern Communications Corporation	Classic Rock
WEMM	107.9 FM	Huntington	Mortenson Broadcasting Co. of West Virginia, LLC	Southern Gospel
WKEE	100.5 FM	Huntington	Capstar TX LLC	Contemporary Hit Radio
WMUL	88.1 FM	Huntington	Marshall University Board of Governors	Variety
WTCR	103.3 FM	Huntington	Capstar TX LLC	Country
WVWV	89.9 FM	Huntington	West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority	Public Radio
WPJW	91.5 FM	Hurricane	Positive Alternative Radio, Inc.	
WMGA	97.9 FM	Kenova	Connoisseur Media, LLC	Adult Contemporary
WTCR	1420 AM	Kenova	Capstar TX LLC	Americana
WCBC	107.1 FM	Keyser	Prosperitas Broadcasting System, LP	Oldies/Classic Rock
WKLP	1390 AM	Keyser	Starcast Systems, Inc.	Sports
WQZK	94.1 FM	Keyser	Starcast Systems, Inc.	Contemporary Hit Radio
WFSP	107.7 FM	Kingwood	WFSP, Inc.	Oldies/Classic Rock
WKMM	96.7 FM	Kingwood	MarPat Corporation	Country
WRON	103.1 FM	Lewisburg	Radio Greenbrier, LLC	Country
WHFI	106.7 FM	Lindside	Monroe County Board of Education	Variety
WVOW	101.9 FM	Logan	Logan Broadcasting Corp.	Full Service
WGYE	102.7 FM	Mannington	Burbach of DE, LLC	Country
WKVW	93.3 FM	Marmet	Educational Media Foundation	Contemporary Christian
WLTF	97.5 FM	Martinsburg	Prettyman Broadcasting Company	Light Adult Contemporary
WVEP	88.9 FM	Martinsburg	West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority	Public Radio
WVKM	106.7 FM	Matewan	Hatfield McCoy Communications, Inc.	Classic Rock
WKAZ	107.3 FM	Miami	West Virginia Radio Corporation of Charleston	Classic Top 40
WRSG	91.5 FM	Middlebourne	Tyler County Board of Education	Variety
WAMX	106.3 FM	Milton	Capstar TX LLC	Active Rock
WELD	101.7 FM	Moorefield	Thunder Associates, LLC	Full Service
WCLG	100.1 FM	Morgantown	Bowers Broadcasting Corporation	Active Rock
WVAQ	101.9 FM	Morgantown	West Virginia Radio Corporation	Contemporary Hit Radio
WVPM	90.9 FM	Morgantown	West Virginia Educational Broadcasting	Public Radio
WWWU	91.7 FM	Morgantown	West Virginia University Board of Governors	Alternative
WLWV	96.5 FM	Moundsville	Educational Media Foundation	Contemporary Christian
WTNJ	105.9 FM	Mount Hope	West Virginia Broadcasting, Inc.	Country
WVJO	92.7 FM	Mullens	West Virginia-Virginia Holding Company, LLC	Adult Hits
WETZ	103.9 FM	New Martinsville	Dailey Corporation	Country
WXCR	92.3 FM	New Martinsville	Seven Ranges Radio Company, Inc.	Classic Rock
WAXS	94.1 FM	Oak Hill	Plateau Broadcasting, Inc.	Oldies/Classic Rock
WGGE	99.1 FM	Parkersburg	Burbach of DE, LLC	Country
WHBR	103.1 FM	Parkersburg	Burbach of DE, LLC	Active Rock

Call sign	Frequency	City of License	Licensee	Format
WSPW	97.9 FM	Parkersburg	Wood County Board of Education	Variety
WVPG	90.3 FM	Parkersburg	West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority	Public Radio
WAUA	89.5 FM	Petersburg	West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority	Public Radio
WQAB	91.3 FM	Philippi	Alderson-Broadus College, Inc.	Adult Contemporary
WRVZ	98.7 FM	Pocatalico	West Virginia Radio Corporation of Charleston	Rhythmic Contemporary
WBYG	99.5 FM	Point Pleasant	Big River Radio, Inc.	Country
WGAG	93.1 FM	Princeton	The Denver Foundation, Incorporated	Oldies
WKOY	100.9 FM	Princeton	Monterey Licenses, LLC	Classic Rock
WPWV	90.1 FM	Princeton	American Family Association	Contemporary Christian
WSTG	95.9 FM	Princeton	Princeton Broadcasting, Inc.	Adult Contemporary
WRLB	95.3 FM	Rainelle	Faith Communications Network, Inc.	Christian/Religious
WRRL	1130 AM	Rainelle	Faith Mountain Communications, Inc.	Southern Gospel
WVAR	600 AM	Richwood	Summit Media, Inc.	Oldies/Classic Rock
WDYK	100.5 FM	Ridgeley	Radioactive, LLC	Adult Contemporary
WCEF	98.3 FM	Ripley	Big River Radio, Inc.	Country
WLKV	90.7 FM	Ripley	Educational Media Foundation	Contemporary Christian
WVSB	104.1 FM	Romney	West Va. Schs. for Deaf and Blind	Classic Country
WKCJ	97.7 FM	Ronceverte	Radio Greenbrier, Inc.	Oldies/Classic Rock
WOBG	105.7 FM	Salem	Burbach of DE, LLC	Classic Rock/Sports
WSHC	89.7 FM	Shepherdstown	Shepherd College Board of Governors	Adult Album Alternative
WWLA	89.3 FM	South Charleston	Educational Media Foundation	Religious
WMCC	105.7 FM	Spencer	Radio 7 Company	Religious
WVRC	104.7 FM	Spencer	Star Communications, Inc.	Country
WKLC	105.1 FM	St. Albans	WKLC, Inc.	Active Rock
WRRR	93.9 FM	St. Marys	Seven Ranges Radio Company, Inc.	Adult Contemporary
WCWV	92.9 FM	Summersville	R-S Broadcasting Company, Inc.	Southern Gospel
WMLJ	90.5 FM	Summersville	Grace Missionary Baptist Church	Religious
WDBS	97.1 FM	Sutton	Summit Media Broadcasting, L.L.C.	Country
WSGB	1490 AM	Sutton	Summit Media Broadcasting, L.L.C.	Oldies/Classic Rock
WDMX	100.1 FM	Vienna	CC Licenses, LLC	Oldies
WAFD	100.3 FM	Webster Springs	Summit Media, Inc.	Hot Adult Contemporary
WELC	102.9 FM	Welch	West Virginia - Virginia Holding Company, LLC	Adult Contemporary
WGLZ	91.5 FM	West Liberty	West Liberty State College	Variety
WFBY	102.3 FM	Weston	AJG Corporation	Classic Rock
WOTR	96.3 FM	Weston	Della Jane Woofter	Religious
WEGW	107.5 FM	Wheeling	Capstar TX LLC	Active Rock
WKWK	97.3 FM	Wheeling	Capstar TX LLC	Adult Contemporary
WOVK	98.7 FM	Wheeling	Capstar TX LLC	Country
WPHP	91.9 FM	Wheeling	Ohio County Board of Education	Contemporary Hit Radio
WVNP	89.9 FM	Wheeling	West Virginia Educational Broadcasting	Public Radio
WXCC	96.5 FM	Williamson	East Kentucky Radio Network, Inc.	Country
WVVV	96.9 FM	Williamstown	Seven Ranges Radio Co., Inc.	Adult Hits

Retrieved on 12/28/10 from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_radio_stations_in_West_Virginia.

*This list is not all inclusive.

Tips for Working with the Media

Media professionals usually have extremely busy schedules due to deadlines. Make yourself available, schedule brief meetings, personally drop off material, or send a special invitation to an event. Working with the media means always being prepared to answer questions and knowing your sources and references. Consider having one staff person designated just for media contacts. Nothing is ever 'off the record.' Stick to the facts and only answer questions you feel comfortable providing a response to. If you're not sure of an answer, rather than stating 'no comment', turn the question around and answer as you see fit. Or ask if you can research it and get back to him/her. Most reporters appreciate being given a 'media packet' (discussed later in this toolkit) that contains a brief summary of the event, a few facts and statistics and a quote they can use in their story. Investing the time in preparing these brief materials prior to the event/interview enables you to better control the message you want to convey.

Media Lingo

- ◆ **Hard News:** more serious, urgent news typically found on the front page or as a lead story.
- ◆ **Feature Story:** in-depth coverage not meant to be used as hard news.
- ◆ **Soft News:** not of serious nature; human interest (i.e. achievements, awards).
- ◆ **Hook:** an angle (key person, idea or event) that will capture the attention of the target audience.
- ◆ **Embargo:** lapse of time in which a release or statement is placed in media's possession but not permitted for use. Often used to give background information. Not recommended.
- ◆ **Media/Sound Bite:** brief, often short part of a longer interview (i.e., quote, speech); often key point that may be repeated.
- ◆ **PSA (Public Service Announcement):** TV or radio announcement that broadcasts your message to a target audience.
- ◆ **News/Press Release:** detailed announcement that typically includes background information (should be used for releasing 'hard news').
- ◆ **Tagline:** frequently repeated phrase that should be included at the bottom of each press release. 1-2 sentences; could be a mission statement.
- ◆ **RSS (Really Simple Syndication) Feed:** notifies internet users of updated content on a web site, blog, or other media internet outlets.

Who's Who in the Newsroom

- ◆ **Media Advisory:** not necessarily meant for print; one page synopsis of who, what, where, when, and why.
- ◆ **Assignment Editor:** day to day assignment of stories
- ◆ **Editor/Editorial Board:** assigns stories and sets the tone for his/her section of newspaper.
- ◆ **Managing Editor:** in charge of editors and operations of entire newspaper.
- ◆ **News Director:** oversees content that will appear on radio or televised news.
- ◆ **Executive Producer:** in network television, equivalent to editor.
- ◆ **Story Producer:** researches, writes, interviews, and oversees camera crew and editing of stories.
- ◆ **Show Producer:** decides which stories will air on the news and in what order; work closely with the writers.
- ◆ **Reporters:** writers in print media; voice on TV and radio.
- ◆ **Public Affairs Director:** responsible for airing PSAs and managing community relations.
- ◆ **Calendar Editor:** responsible for event listing and announcements.
- ◆ **Freelance Writers/Photographers:** often 'write or produce news for a variety of news outlets without being employed by any single outlet.'

- **Using statistics**

Most reporters want the facts, so use data. However, *never* cite a statistic for which you cannot provide the source. Familiarize yourself with statistics regarding sexual violence and stalking and how that data is collected. For example, surveys differ in their definitions of the data that is collected; some include victims over the age of 18; others only include forcible rape in their definition of sexual assault. These definitions impact the results. (For more information, read the background section of the *One in Nine* publication at www.fris.org.)

“Several general statistics are provided by national data on rape, and it is helpful to make distinctions in terminology prior to a review of the findings from individual studies. It is important to note that there is a distinction between *rape cases* and *rape victims*. A single rape victim may (and often does) have experienced multiple rape cases. Similarly, there is an important distinction to be made between *rape prevalence* and *rape incidence*. *Prevalence* refers to the proportion or percent of the population that has been raped at least once in a specific period of time. “Lifetime” and “past-year” are common time frames used in the assessment of prevalence. *Incidence* refers to the number of new cases of rape that occur in a specified period of time. Incidence is most often expressed as a victimization rate, or number of incidents per given number of people.” (Kilpatrick & McCauley)

For example:

- One in six adult women will be a victim of attempted or completed forcible rape in her lifetime.
- Every two minutes someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted.

Kilpatrick and McCauley suggest when collecting rape statistics to ask yourself the following questions as you consider each source:

- What types of rape and other forms of sexual violence are being measured and/or reported (e.g., forcible rape only, other types of rape such as drug-alcohol facilitated rape, attempted rape, other sexual violence)?
- Among which group is rape being measured and to which groups are rape statistics generalized (e.g., all adult women, female children and adolescents, all persons of all ages, college students, etc.)? Are important groups excluded?
- During which time frame are cases being measured or reported (e.g., past year, past six months, throughout childhood and adolescence, throughout life time)?
- Are statistics based on cases reported to law enforcement or from victimization surveys?
- If statistics and estimates are obtained from a victimization survey, what is the wording of screening questions and how well do the questions capture the types of rape that should be measured?
- What is the unit of analysis used for reporting the rape statistics (e.g., number of rape cases, number of women raped in a given period of time, percentage of women raped in a given period of time, number of cases per 10,000 women)?

For additional information and the full report, *Understanding National Rape Statistics* visit: http://new.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/AR_RapeStatistics.pdf

When you are providing reporters with statistics, use recent and accurate information in order to convey the extent of the problem. Not all sources are reliable or valid; therefore, it is recommended that you refer to the following:

- *National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)*: conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice every six months and released annually (bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/).
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*: provide up-to-date sexual violence fact sheets (www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/sexualviolence/index.html or www.cdc.gov).

You can also find statistics at www.rainn.org (RAINN) and www.fris.org (WV FRIS), or contact WV FRIS directly at 304-366-9500.



F.Y.I.

What should you do when you find, what you believe to be reliable, sources with varying statistics? If you are confident that the sources provide accurate information through reliable research, then use a range. For example, in 2003 the *National Crime Victimization Survey* indicated that 61% of sexual assaults were unreported; Kilpatrick et al., (2007) found that 84% of rape cases are unreported; and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1992-2000) reported that 60% of rapes/sexual assaults were unreported. If you shared these numbers with a reporter you would state that between 60-84% of sexual assaults are unreported, or only 16-40% of sexual assaults are reported to law enforcement.

- **How to pitch a newsworthy story**

When pitching a story it is extremely important that you have researched previous publications/broadcasts and understand the audience the reporter is focused on reaching. If you are not sure who is covering your issue, call the media outlet and ask. Make your story newsworthy by pitching a story, not an issue. Provide information for a unique event, identify a celebrity who supports your issue to boost interest, or link your issue to a historical or topical event. Questions you might ask yourself: Why is this story important? Is there conflict or controversy surrounding this issue? Does it have a personal angle? Does your story have broad appeal to the general public?

- **Pitch your story**- the best way to **pitch** a story is to identify a *hook* or *angle*. A pitch letter should be sent to the media outlet a few days in advance. Include a 'lead' paragraph (your hook) to get the reporter's attention accompanied by a credible contact person who can be available for an interview.

- **Formulating an effective Media Bite**

Reporters love media (or sound) bites. Most generally, only a small portion – or one to three sentences – of your interview or letter will end up being published or broadcast. Media bites are aired via radio or television, or used as quotes in printed material. Due to Americans' short attention span and limited space for news, media bites are perfect for promoting your issue and making a strong statement. Personalize your statement(s) and practice with co-workers or colleagues to achieve maximum effectiveness.



F.Y.I.

- ✓ State the problem and a plausible solution.
- ✓ Use irony when appropriate (compare to unrealistic assumptions or myths).
- ✓ Avoid jargon or acronyms.
- ✓ Keep it short and to the point (15 seconds or less).
- ✓ Identify different ways to phrase your message.

Examples:

“Rapists are not just strangers lurking in the night. (Number) rapes occurred this past year in West Virginia alone. Although nearly (number)% of victims know their offenders, the reality is that arrests are made in less than ¼ of reported cases.”

“We don’t say to home owners, ‘Well, if you didn’t have that expensive television or nice home you probably wouldn’t have been robbed.’ But our society tends to blame rape victims for their own victimization – ‘She shouldn’t have been wearing that short skirt or been out late.’ Offenders need to be held accountable for their behavior.”

- **Seize a media moment**

Take advantage of related local, state and national events to create ‘teachable moments.’ A celebrity stalker provides an opportunity for a story on West Virginia’s stalking laws. A breaking story on a sexual assault arrest at the local university is an opportunity to provide information on prevention. The arrest of a professional athlete on sexual violence charges can generate local discussion through an op-ed or letter to the editor. Assist your local media in tying other stories in to your services and message.

Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor provide a great opportunity to share an opinion on an important issue, educate the public, recognize someone or an agency for a job well-done, or criticize policies. Letters should be related to a topic recently discussed in the newspaper. Try to respond quickly and find creative ways to discuss the topic and present unique solutions. Always support your position with facts, remember your purpose, and avoid personal attacks. Ask a trusted colleague to proofread your letter and provide feedback.

Letters to the editor should be no more than 250 words, or three paragraphs. To engage your audience, begin with a strong opening statement. Be sure to make reference to, or comment on the story which you are responding to, but at the same time make it so your article can stand on its own if the reader has not read the previous story.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR EXAMPLE FORMAT

Letter to the Editor

[Newspaper name]

[Newspaper address, fax, or email]

Date:

Dear Editor:

On [date], you reported that _____

This is [timely/interesting] because _____

As a(n) [advocate/counselor/attorney/SART member]it is our belief that _____

What people don’t realize is _____

One thing that can really make a difference is _____

Members of the community can _____

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Editorial: Many assault victims left out by protection-order statute

Advocates for victims of sexual assaults and stalking say West Virginia state law needs a fix because current rules outlining the use of protective orders do little to protect a majority of those victims.

They spell out a strong case.

The limitation in current law, they say, is that while it allows protective orders to be issued to prohibit attackers from coming near their victims, that only applies to an attacker who is a relative of the victim or lives in the same home.

That leaves a gap, the advocates told lawmakers this week, because 70 percent of stalking victims and 88 percent of rape victims do not fit those situations outlined by law.

In some cases, where a suspect has been identified and charged with a crime, the suspect can be ordered to stay away from the victim as a condition of bond. However, Nancy Hoffman of the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information Services told lawmakers that less than a quarter of rape and stalking cases produce arrests. Meanwhile, victims have no other options, even if law enforcement authorities are trying to build a case against an alleged attacker.

That's the gap she and other advocates want to see filled. To accentuate her point, she cited the current Penn State University scandal in which a former assistant football coach is accused of molesting boys, according to a report in the Charleston Daily Mail. If that had happened in West Virginia, the victims would have no recourse under current state law to obtain a protective order.

Lawmakers who heard the testimony of Hoffman and others seemed open to developing a remedy in the law during the 2012 legislative session, and they should be. This is a flaw in the statute that should be corrected.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(Print on your agency's letterhead.)

(Date)

(Editor Name)

(Newspaper Name)

(Street Address)

(City, State, ZIP)

Dear Editor:

Sexual assault is a devastating crime that is committed with shocking frequency in our society. In *(your city/county)* alone there were over *(your city/county stats)* sexual assaults reported to law enforcement in *(year)*. This number is alarmingly high, but it does not begin to reflect the full extent of the problem. According to the American Medical Association, sexual assault remains the most dramatically under-reported crime, and an estimated two-thirds of assaults are never reported—often

because victims fear they will be blamed for the assault. As leaders and role models in our communities, we cannot afford to remain silent about sexual violence or blame victims for the decisions of perpetrators. This injustice only serves to create an atmosphere where sexual violence is implicitly condoned and perpetuated. We must use our voices to break the silence and build a culture where respectful relationships are expected, where sexual violence is not tolerated, where offenders are held accountable for their actions, and where victims and their families are given the support they need to heal.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, a nationally designated time to focus our efforts on sexual violence education, prevention, and awareness. (*Your agency*) joins advocates and survivors across the country in this national observation. During Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and throughout the year, we invite everyone to take a stand with us against sexual violence. There are simple ways each of us can daily take a stand against sexual violence. We set a powerful example every time we talk to our children about the importance of respect and equality in relationships, every time we speak up if someone makes a degrading comment, every time we demonstrate support for survivors of sexual violence. By educating ourselves and talking with others, we can challenge our communities to change the social norms that foster sexual violence. For more information or to get involved, contact (*agency*) at (*phone*). Together we can end sexual violence.

Sincerely,
 (Name)
 (Title)
 (Agency)
 (Address)
 (Phone Number)

Op-Ed (Opinion Editorial)

An op-ed is an opinion piece on a public interest matter that is usually published in newspapers or online publications. Op-ed pieces are commonly found opposite the editorial page and are designed to express an alternate view of a topic. They are generally written on local or national events by experts, community leaders, groups, or individuals to bring awareness to the public on a topical issue.

Editors may receive several op-ed pieces each day on particular articles. To increase the chances of being published consider the following:



- ◆ Pieces should be between 600-900 words
- ◆ Use powerful words that are appealing to the reader and leave a lasting impression
- ◆ Support opinion with facts, statistics, and examples
- ◆ Final statement should reflect an outcome (what you think should happen)
- ◆ Include contact information
- ◆ Ask a key stakeholder in the community to co-author
- ◆ Make writing style consistent with media source
- ◆ Send op-ed to one media outlet
- ◆ Consider pitching the idea to the editor ahead of time
- ◆ Follow up 1-2 weeks after the op-ed is submitted to ask if it will be published

OP-ED EXAMPLE FORMAT

Contact:
(Name, title)
(Phone)
(E-mail)

By (Name)
(Title)
(Organization)

PARAGRAPH 1: (Lead paragraph; attention grabbing statement)

PARAGRAPH 2: (Brief reason for op-ed piece)

PARAGRAPH 3: (Background information related to your reason for writing. Include persuasive points, statistics and solutions with your organization's point of view on the topic.)

LAST PARAGRAPH: (Conclude with a closing sentence that summarizes your point, and appeals to the reader. Include your organization's contact information).

~MORE~ (only if op-ed continues to page 2)
~END~ (to signify the end of the release)

SAMPLE OP-ED

Contact:
(Name and Title)
(Phone)
(Email)

By (Name)
(Title)
(Agency)

We see it all too often: The public – and sometimes the justice system – turns on a victim, and the victim of a heinous crime ends up being tried instead. It's a travesty for the victim, and for society because simply put, that's not the way our system was designed to work.

Such was the story for the victim who alleged former Blakefield University football player, Andy Gardner of rape last fall.

Gardner's defense attorney was granted permission by the court to question the victim on similar allegations she brought against a Foster State student four years earlier. This drove prosecutors on Friday to announce they were withdrawing all charges against Gardner.

That's a shame for the victim in this case, and for victims of all crimes.

It's the duty of the state to investigate and thoroughly prosecute all crimes, and protect all victims. That's the law. And it's also the duty of the justice system – and the public – to take into account the facts that

pertain specifically to the case at hand. We came a long way in our legal system when a rape victim's past wasn't allowed into a courtroom. Why is this case an exception? Why is she on trial?

While we're disappointed that the prosecution elected to drop the case against Gardner based upon information completely irrelevant to the current alleged crime, we're even more fearful of the message it might send to victims of all violent crimes – victims who have gone voiceless and powerless to seek justice for far too long.

Rape and sexual assault remains the least reported of all violent crimes – only 41.4 percent of incidents were reported in 2006, according to Bureau of Justice statistics. We fear this decision might serve as a step backward for victims who might otherwise consider letting their voices be heard.

Just as it is the legal right of the accused to have his or her fair day in court, the victim is due the same justice. The day we allow a victim's past or the accused celebrity status to steer the actions of the state is the day that we fail to provide justice in our society.

We hope that victims of sexual violence know there are rape crisis centers waiting to help. These centers provide free, confidential services including: advocacy to help victims navigate the medical and legal systems; and support to help victims heal from the trauma of rape and sexual assault in order to reclaim their lives.

For confidential support, contact your local rape crisis center or the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services (for contact information visit www.fris.org).

~END~

*Adapted, with permission, from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape
"Media Relations Made Easy"*

Media Advisory/Alert

Not to be confused with a News/Press Release, a Media Advisory/Alert serves as an invitation to media representatives to attend an event. The format should include who is sponsoring the event, why the event is taking place, a brief synopsis: 1 to 2 sentences of the event/activity (what), where the event will be held, and when (date and time) it will take place. Media advisories need to be submitted at least 3 days prior to the event, or longer depending on the frequency of release for your media outlet. Send the advisory via fax or email if possible and follow-up with a phone call to ensure they received your announcement and answer any questions. Consider sending a Media Alert the day of your event as a reminder. Always be prepared for a short interview and prepare some brief written materials to distribute. If you plan for reporters from more than one media outlet, vary the quotes and content of the materials.

MEDIA ADVISORY FORMAT EXAMPLE

(LOGO)

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

Contact:
(Name, title)
(Phone)
(Email)

SAVE THE DATE: (Date)

WHO: (Sponsors, key speakers,

WHAT: (Describe the event in 2-3 sentences)

WHERE: (Location, building, address)

WHY: (Include 2-3 sentences stating why your event is important, and provide background information)

~END~

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

MEDIA/PRESS ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Release/Today's date)

(LOGO)

(Agency Name)
(Agency Address)
For more information contact:
(Your name)
(Phone)
(Email)

WHAT: SECOND ANNUAL (EVENT) TO BENEFIT SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

WHO: Sponsored by (agency) together with the (organization). Key speakers include:

- (Name) (Title, Organization/Significant role)
- (Name) (Title, Organization/Significant role)

WHEN: (0:00 to 0:00 a.m./p.m.) on (day of week) (Month, date, 20__)

WHERE: (Name of building and location with address)

BACKGROUND: The (organization/event) was launched in (Month, year) with the mission to (insert mission). Led by (persons/agencies) and has grown into (campaign/number of sponsors or members). Last year (organization/event) efforts raised more than (\$).

(Paragraph with mission/services)

PHOTO OPPORUNITIES AVAILABLE

~END~

Press/News Release

A Press/News Release contains similar details as a Media Advisory; however, it serves a different purpose. While a media advisory is for the actual media representative, a news release focuses on bringing attention to the public regarding your event or issue. News releases should contain basic information such as: who, what, where, when, and why along with additional elements to garner coverage. Releases are to be used for covering hard news – release of new statistics, announcing a new project that impacts the community, or a noteworthy event. Send a release before or after your event to highlight significant details. If the press is not invited to your event or it is a low-key event, consider putting this information on the events calendar rather than submitting a news release.

Limit the length of your release to one or two pages, single sided and double-spaced. Start with a ‘lead’ paragraph to grab the reader’s attention, and give realistic examples of how this issue has impacted a real person’s life. Establish credibility by including a quote from an organization leader, or providing background information to build on your cause. The final paragraph summarizes the event in three sentences or less. Finalize your release by placing ‘###’ at the bottom of your document.

PRESS/NEWS RELEASE EXAMPLE FORMAT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Today’s date)

CONTACT: (Name)
(Title)
(Phone)
(Email)

(HEALINE: ALL CAPS)

PARAGRAPH 1: (Reason for release, who is involved, when and where)

PARAGRAPH 2: (Why is the event significant or newsworthy)

PARAGRAPH 3: (Quote from someone involved in the event to signify importance)

PARAGRAPH 4: (Basic background and more details on when and where)

PARAGRAPH 5: (Other details, quotes, or special guests/speakers)

FINAL PARAGRAPH: (Quote or sentence to described organization(s) role in event)

###

SAMPLE NEWS/PRESS RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact:
(Name, title)
(Phone)
(Email)

Chasetown, WV (April XX, 20XX) – Rape Crisis Center Advocates joined the Victims’ Rights Organization and supporters at the Capitol on Monday in a rally to bring awareness to the rights of victims of violent crimes.

The rally was held in conjunction with the National Crime Victims’ Rights Week – April XX-XX.

“POWER Rape Crisis Center was proud to be co-sponsor of the Crime Victim’s Rights Rally today in the Capitol that was filled with survivors, victim advocates and law enforcement,” said POWER Director, Liz Tyler. “Voices of courage and commitment were heard in our ongoing quest to make victim’s rights a vibrant part of the social fabric of our society.”

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week has been observed throughout the country since 1981. Rallies, candlelight vigils and commemorative activities highlight the week in an effort to promote crime victims’ rights, and to honor crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf.

In West Virginia, hundreds of people from throughout the state – including elected officials, survivors, advocates and law enforcement officials – filled the Capitol to mark the start of the week.

The crowd heard Martha Vineyard, victim activist for Sisters Against Drunk Driving, share her story of loss, and offer encouragement to speak to local legislators about ensuring victims’ right and funding.

West Virginia’s Attorney General, Chadwick Vaughn served as the keynote speaker for the event. Vaughn spoke to the crowd about the role government plays in public safety, and said that everyone must work together to ensure offenders of violent crimes are held accountable for their actions.

Jack Rudolph with MARS talked to the audience in an effort to encourage men to take a stance against sexual violence. He told everyone to think of the women in their lives, and make a pledge to end sexual violence.

Sam Smith, deputy commissioner for the West Virginia State Police, talked about challenges that currently exist in communities across the state, but said “we will stand here today strong and unwavering.”

“This rally offers a wonderful opportunity for victims, victim advocates, lawmakers, and others to join together to raise our voices on behalf of survivors of crime,” said Nancy Pierce, executive director of WVCASV. “It is our time to promote the rights of victims and the importance of standing up for survivors in our neighborhoods, our towns, our state and our nation.”

~MORE~

The theme of this year's rally was "Remembrance". It is a message that is being used nationwide as individuals, agencies and local governments work to unite in their message so that no victim of crime is ever forgotten.

"That means there will be no justice for any of us if we don't seek greater fairness for victims of crime," Vaughn said. "It's time for our community to stand behind those harmed by crime. That's why we are here today and every day."

~END~

*Adapted, with permission, from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape
"Media Relations Made Easy"*

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

PSAs can be submitted to radio, television, or print media outlets. First, use your media list and find out who accepts PSAs and attempt to get in contact with the public service or community affairs director. Once you have your contact person identified, discuss with them how they would like to receive your PSA. It is a good idea to have a 'camera' ready copy of your PSA along with a letter to request that your message be broadcast or printed. Another option for submitting your PSA is a pre-recorded CD or DVD. Radio stations may ask you to schedule an in-person meeting to record your message, or request a written copy to be read "live" by the radio personality.



PSAs should be no longer than 30 seconds. State the problem, how it affects listeners and provide a solution or how they can help.

Examples:

1. Last year rape crisis centers in West Virginia helped over [#] victims of sexual assault. If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual assault, help is only a phone call away. Contact your local center now at [phone number]. If you would like more information on how you can help end sexual violence, call 1-800-656-HOPE. Learn more about what you can do to become part of the solution to make our community safer.
2. April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Sexual violence is a crime that affects everyone, not just survivors. One in six women and one in 33 men will be assaulted during her or his lifetime. Rape is a crime of violence. No one ever asks to be raped. If you need help or someone to talk to, call 1-800-656-HOPE.
3. PARENTS, you would do anything to protect your child...so start the conversation. Educate your child about sexual abuse. It's hard to consider anyone taking advantage of your child, but in West Virginia over 60% of sexual assault victims are minors. And the perpetrator is almost always someone your child knows, and likely trusts. Talk to your child today and know that you can make a difference. For more information, call 1-800-656-HOPE for free and confidential help and support.
4. In West Virginia, we want to end sexual violence and we can "*Start by Believing*". Sexual Assault Awareness Month provides an opportunity to bring awareness and education to the problem of sexual violence, and the effects it has on victims and our community. Victims often feel shame, and fear that no one will believe them. It's not about the way she dressed, or if they shared a kiss. It's time to start believing victims and holding offenders accountable. Learn how you can make a difference. For more information, call 1-800-656-HOPE.

Media Interviews

Media protocols should be established to determine how your organization will respond to media inquiries. Designate a spokesperson, identify key representatives, and have a plan for when your agency is contacted by the media. Talking to reporters and scheduling interviews gives your organization an opportunity to educate the reporters about your issue or perspective.

- **How to prepare for an interview**

You should develop a contact sheet for agency staff who might take the initial call. Items to include: a) name of the publication b) reporter's name and contact information c) date and time of call d) deadline e) nature of the story f) what the reporter is seeking. Ask the reporter how they got your name and who else they have talked to, or plan on talking to. Be sure to respond promptly; however, give yourself adequate time to prepare, gather facts, and speak with your supervisor. You can always ask the reporter to email you a list of questions.

When preparing for an interview, keep your intended message in mind. If possible, choose a location where you feel comfortable and arrive early. You should be prepared to answer tough questions. One way to prepare is by developing arguments and counterarguments. If the reporter makes a statement that does not apply to the norm, you can reply by stating, "That's not typical, but let me share a more common scenario."

<i>DO:</i>	<i>DON'T:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relax ▪ Stay calm and courteous ▪ Gather facts ▪ Develop 3-5 talking points ▪ Prepare for difficult questions ▪ Be concise and make your point ▪ Repeat key points ▪ Stick to what you know ▪ Pause before answering ▪ Follow-up with supporting materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Criticize ▪ Lie or exaggerate ▪ Answer hypothetical questions ▪ Respond defensively ▪ Engage in conversation ▪ Divert from the topic ▪ Breach confidentiality ▪ Diminish your credibility ▪ Fill silence ▪ Say 'no comment'

- **Responding to a media "crisis"**

A media "crisis" can occur at any time and requires a quick, concise response. Planning ahead is imperative whether your organization plans to officially respond or not. Agency policies should clearly state a plan of action regarding who should or should not speak with the media. Do not feel pressured into responding immediately if you are not prepared. Take the time to prepare your answers and discuss them with your colleagues. It is important to research current media coverage as well as statements being made by reporters. Contact your allies for assistance and support.



Suppose the controversy directly involves your agency and a reporter wants facts which you are not permitted to discuss. Do not be afraid to make a direct statement. For example, you could say, "I am not permitted to discuss...however, I can assure you that..." It is important to remain calm, be courteous, and provide consistent statements.

Survivor Stories and the Media

Sexual violence can be a difficult topic to introduce to an audience who has little prior knowledge about the realities of the issue. Often, advocates (and reporters) have very limited time to make an impact on audience members and need to provide information that is not only educational, but will also resonate with audience members after the fact. Reporters are also looking for a way to capture the audience's attention in a very short amount of time. Sharing specific details of a survivor's story can seem like an easy way to meet this challenge because stories often demonstrate both the specifics of sexual violence as well as the impact on the survivor. However, rape crisis centers and those charged with media inquiries must consider whether or not it is appropriate and/or safe to disclose information about a survivor. Remember to talk to your agency director and/or refer to your agency policy before answering requests for survivor interviews from the media.

When working with a survivor and the media, carefully consider why the media might choose to utilize a survivor or include details about a survivor's experience. It is recommended that you do not ask a survivor who is currently receiving services or support from you or your organization, as she may not feel comfortable declining your request. When asking for permission from a survivor to share her experience, do your best to ask in a way that allows the survivor to say "no."

Reasons NOT to use a survivor to share her/his experience:

1. A survivor has not worked through the trauma and had the time to emotionally heal. *When a request is made for a survivor to speak, it is natural to consider someone you have recently worked with. But healing takes time.*
2. A survivor has no experience in sharing her/his story with a large audience. *There is a huge difference between telling one or two supportive persons about a sexual assault versus standing up in front of a microphone in front of many strangers. It is better to let them first have the experience sharing in a safe environment - such as a rape crisis center's volunteer training or staff meeting - to more adequately assess their comfort level.*
3. You are in a rural area. *A survivor may feel comfortable sharing her story with strangers, but hasn't considered that her minister or aunt (or others she has not told or shared details with about the assault) may be in the audience.*
4. Safety may be a concern. *If the offender was never arrested, has been released, or remains unknown, sharing her/his story with a large audience may become a threat to the survivor's safety and well-being.*

Reasons NOT to share details of survivors' experiences:

1. To provide "shock value" about the nature of sexual violence – *too often sexual violence is sensationalized in the hopes of getting a reaction out of an audience.*
2. When statistics and/or other forms of information are just as effective to make your point – *if facts do enough to make your point, leave it at that.*
3. Survivors will be a part of the audience – *sexual violence affects so many people, chances are there will be a survivor who reads or views the media story. Focusing on the details of an individual's experience may be re-traumatizing for other survivors.*
4. Because just as there are survivors in each audience, it is very likely there are also offenders – *sharing stories may incite offenders and/or give them ideas for further perpetration.*

Reasons to share details of survivors' experiences:

1. To cultivate empathy for survivors and what they have experienced – *examples remind the audience that these crimes happen to real people.*
2. To demonstrate the widespread nature of sexual violence – *when survivors from different populations experience similar things, it demonstrates the commonalities of sexual violence.*
3. To breakdown stereotypes and myths about both victims and perpetrators – *sometimes, statistics may generalize an issue while stories show the diversity of people and experiences.*
4. To provide a context for the audience about survivors' experiences – *a story can show that a sexual assault is only one part of an individual survivor's identity, putting their experience into a broader framework.*
5. To make an impact on the audience – *using a survivor's story can be a powerful teaching tool and learning experience that "stays with" the audience once they have read/heard a story.*
6. To give the audience ideas on what they can do – *using a true story, the audience can practice bystander interventions based on real-life examples.*
7. To bring awareness – *to highlight what worked or didn't work about a particular response or intervention.*



Encourage the reporter to include the intention for using a survivor's experience with the article or media clip. Emphasize confidentiality and safety concerns. Discuss when and where the interview will be aired/printed, and request the right for the survivor to review and edit prior to distribution. Ask the reporter to provide information on the local rape crisis center's services at the end of their segment.

- **Preparing a survivor for an interview**

If you or your agency are working with a survivor to help prepare for an interview consider the following:

- The intent and purpose of utilizing survivors' experiences: *What unique benefits will come of this? What other approaches can you consider that would have equivalent effects?*
- Who is the audience and what is expected to be gained by utilizing a personal experience? *What do you know about the audience and media source beforehand to help determine appropriateness? Does the media source use statements that place blame or responsibility for an assault on victims?*
- The length of the interview, other spokespersons and the angle of the story: *What events are scheduled to coincide with the interview? Who else will be interviewed and for what purpose?*

Prior to the Interview

- ✓ Discuss privacy concerns with the survivor. Determine if she wants to conceal her identify.
- ✓ Inform the survivor that she does not have to answer questions she is not comfortable answering.
- ✓ Offer to have an advocate accompany the survivor to the interview.
- ✓ Develop a plan with the producer/reporter to limit topics and to terminate the interview midstream if necessary.
- ✓ Ask the survivor if she would like to practice the interview.
- ✓ Inform the survivor of her right to decline or end the interview at any point.
- ✓ Obtain a signed release of information form from the survivor. Because you have arranged for the survivor to speak with a reporter, you are acknowledging that you have provided services to that survivor.

Media Packets

Reporters typically work on deadlines and need immediate access to information. Successful media relations require an understanding of roles and responsibilities. Preparing a media packet can significantly enhance your ability to provide quick, accurate and concise information when an unexpected opportunity arises for news coverage. Media packets should be prepared well in advance, updated periodically and contain well-written, reliable information. Items to include in a media packet include (Wallack et al., 1999):

- Fact sheets (with sources);
- Agency brochure;
- Recent news release;
- Contact information and brief bios for affiliated speakers;
- Copies of recently published articles or op-ed pieces;
- Background information on the organization; and
- Business cards.

Customize the packet to specific events when possible. More is not always better; not all reporters will take the time to read a large packet of information. Make sure that the key points of the message you want to convey are readily and easily identifiable.

Welcome the Opportunity!

The purpose of the news media is to disseminate stories and information. You have important messages that need to be heard regarding sexual violence, stalking, and prevention. The media provides multiple venues for you to share your messages. Use the media creatively, wisely and often to assist you in your efforts to effectively reach victims, educate potential jurors, and change social norms.

The following provided valuable information and guidance through the development of this toolkit.

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