

MEDIA GUIDE

For Crime Victims and Survivors

Provided by the Blair County Victim Witness Department

THINGS TO KNOW

You have the choice whether to speak to media, but keep in mind that you will have little control over what is reported and how it is presented.

If you want to ask a question or talk "off the record" meaning something you do not want them to report, then be very clear when that begins and ends.

Don't forget your public social media content is available to journalists.



MAKING YOUR DECISION

PROS

You may be able to prevent future crimes like yours and change policies regarding this type of victimization.

You can help public understanding of what victims go through physically, emotionally, spiritually, financially and socially.

You can tell your side of the story so the focus is not on the perpetrator or how the crime was committed.

CONS

You may harm the investigation and prosecution of the crime.

Your privacy may be difficult to guard and what you say in court may be recorded.

You may increase your trauma, feel revictimized or even increase your danger by being identified.



REPORTERS

Reporters usually do not know ahead of time how traumatized you are.

Most local reporters are caring people who do not try to cause you harm, but each has different skills, deadlines, experience and abilities to understand and report your story.

The media may publicize something that you believe is unfair, inaccurate or incomplete.

Reporters usually want to report as much information as fast as possible.



COMMON MEDIA QUESTIONS

- What happened to you/your loved one? When did you learn about it? Where were you when you found out? How did you find out?
- Why was your loved one doing what they were doing when this happened?
- How has this affected you and your family?
- Tell me about your loved one. Who was he or she?
- How do you feel about what happened to you? Are you angry?
- Who was involved?
- Why did it happen? What was the cause?
- What should happen next? Who is to blame? Who should pay for this and how?

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

- You can select the timing and location for an interview, including someone to speak for you. Remember that other friends and family also may have something to say.
- Ask the reporter what the story is about to help you prepare your answers.
- Relax and speak slowly and clearly. Listen to the entire question before answering.
- Come up with a few points you want to get across, write them down and say them right away during the interview. For example: "The one thing I really want to say is...", or "My most important message is...: You can repeat your important points.
- Give yourself a break if you get emotional during the interview.
- Although you cannot control coverage, you may ask reporters to not attend a funeral, go to the victim's home or show offensive images on television.
- If you're unsure, you can say, "I don't have enough information to answer that."
- Reporters may have information that you do not know. Ask them what they know.
- If you believe an important error was reported by the media, you may want to talk to the news director and explain your concern and, if need be, ask for a correction.
- Let victim services or law enforcement know if you feel harassed by a reporter.

For more information or support, please contact the Blair County Victim Witness Department

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