WORKING WITH THE MEDIA: A TOOLKIT FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

IN THIS TOOLKIT:

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WHY A MEDIA TOOLKIT FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS?

The goal of news media is to inform, educate, entertain, and persuade; therefore, journalists are in a unique position to shape discussions on sexual assault and either reinforce stereotypes or debunk commonly held myths. Advocates have an opportunity to guide that discussion to reflect what we know about the issue. We are the experts; therefore, we must be prepared to fill that role.

The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence has been working with journalists, state administrators, victim advocates, and educators to address sexual assault coverage by the media, specifically newspapers. The workgroup, which met periodically throughout 2003, created a resource called "Reporting Sexual Assault: A Guide for Journalists." This document was developed to encourage more accurate and compassionate reporting on sexual assault by newspaper journalists and editors in Michigan. We hope this information will be used to better inform the public about the realities of sexual assault. However, it will take more than a manual to increase and improve media coverage.

"Media doesn't just happen, nor is it an afterthought. Successful newsmakers plan carefully how to communicate their news to target audiences,"
Karen Jeffreys, Public Relations Director, Rhode Island Coalition

In conducting our research and developing the resource for journalists, a great deal was learned about what goes into a story, how decisions are made in the newsroom, and who the key people are in the process. A survey of Michigan College and University Communication and Journalism Departments confirmed that most journalists typically do not receive formal training on crime victim issues, let alone sexual assault. In fact, despite the life and death issues they often face on a regular basis, journalists usually receive little or no training or support for facing and dealing with trauma. (See Appendix E for the survey's Executive Summary)

More importantly, it became clear that as advocates, we needed to be more proactive than reactive when it comes to coverage of our issue. This Service Provider tool kit is a companion to the "Guide for Journalists." It includes some basic information about the media, and provides a foundation for reshaping the public discussion on sexual assault. We hope that this resource will encourage relationships between local media and sexual assault programs. This resource will prepare you to be responsive while proposing strategies for approaching local media outlets.

WHY IS MEDIA IMPORTANT?

"The media can provide visibility, legitimacy, and credibility to an issue and to the organization advocating for social change."
Wallack, Woodruff, Dorfman and Diaz, 1999

What is Media?

Historians and sociologists have concluded that people have an intrinsic need - an instinct - to know what is occurring beyond their direct experience. Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester, "News as Purposive Behavior: On the Strategic Use of Routine Events, Accidents and Scandal," American Sociological Review, 39, February 1974, 101-112.

Media has consequently become a means for mass communication and information sharing. People turn to various media outlets, both electronic and print, in search of information. These outlets can include news, advertising, or entertainment.

What is Media Advocacy?

The concept of working with the media to educate the public on specific issues is not new. Social service agencies have often looked at media as a source of advertising for their events and services. However, there is much more to it than just getting "media coverage" on an issue. "Media Advocacy" is the use of mass media to get your issue covered, reframe or shape the public discussion, and build support for a point of view. It is the use of media as a tool in communicating a specific message.

In today's society, the media profoundly influences the thoughts and beliefs of its citizens. It also affects the "political context that shapes social change efforts."
Wallack, Woodruff, Dorfman and Diaz, 1999

The media is a powerful tool for influencing public opinion. "Research on the newspaper coverage of crime indicates that newspapers have a significant effect on public perception of violent crime, far more than any other news source (Derek J. Paulsen, "Murder in Black and White," Homicide Studies, Vol. 7, No. 3, August 2003)."

The media wants to share information, and we have a message to share. But first, in order to be effective media advocates, organizations and individuals need to have a plan for determining and communicating that message.

COMMUNICATION PLANNING: THE FOUNDATION FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

A well-targeted communications strategy grows from a clearly focused mission and a strategic plan for your organization as a whole. A strategic plan helps your agency be clear about its program and organizational goals. In turn, a communication plan will help your agency clarify 1) the message the audiences need to hear to help you reach your program goals; 2) appropriate audiences for the message; 3) tactics to reach those audiences; and 4) individuals identified and authorized to convey that message. Communication planning will also help focus your efforts by identifying and demonstrating the organizational time, energy, and resources that go into communication activities. It will encourage thought and reflection, leading to a more systematic approach and better results. It is essential that advocates know their agencies' strategic and communication plans in order to better shape and influence consistent messages from every level of the organization.

Public Relations: The activities used to create interest in an organization or idea."PR is more than just getting media coverage for events."
Karen Jeffreys, Public Relations Director, Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence

If your agency does not have a formal strategic plan, start with the question "what do we want to achieve?" When you know what you want to accomplish, communication goals can be developed based on what needs to happen or what needs to change. By setting a goal or objective for a specific message, for example, additional steps in the communication process can be determined. For example, when developing objectives:

- Name the audience and action needed to reach it
- Identify benefits and barriers to taking action
- Be mindful of competition
- Choose the appropriate vehicle for reaching the audience

In addition to laying the groundwork for next steps, identifying specific communication goals and objectives is important for another reason. It provides an opportunity to designate appropriate individuals and/or teams to work on specific tasks. Regardless of individual job responsibilities, we are all communicators! Every individual in the organization interacts with current or potential audiences. On an informal level these interactions provide an opportunity to educate and provide information on issues, services and resources. On a more formal level, agencies often designate specific individuals to be the voice of the organization in response to media inquiries or to speak out on specific issues. This is often the Executive Director, Public Relations Director, or other members of the management or leadership team. It is important for staff to be aware of what the communication or media policy is for your organization. (See Responding to the Media)

Being strategic about communications means deciding when and how you can best reach your priority audiences.

Media is only one component of communication planning. The focus of this current resource is to maximize your use of the media to spread your message to the appropriate audiences. (For more information on Communication Planning see Appendix D.)

BUILDING MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS

Comments from both journalists and advocates indicate that building and maintaining contacts is crucial to improving and increasing media coverage. Having an updated list of contacts is crucial to both responding and contributing to news stories. The following steps outline easy and effective ways to create and utilize media contact lists.

Step One: If You Haven't Already, Develop a Media List

Identify local media outlets.

- √ Collect contact names, e-mail and business addresses, phone and fax numbers.
- √ Use professional directories and/or information gained from media monitoring. (The topic of monitoring the media is covered later in this guide.)

Recognize and acknowledge the readership/viewership of individual outlets.

- √ Identify daily, weekly, or monthly newspapers or publications.
- √ Consider using smaller community based publications or publications with a focused audience or theme.
- √ When using TV, cable, and radio stations, be familiar with specialized programming.
- √ Organizational newsletters can provide an audience as well. This might include other social service organizations or affinity groups, such as United Way, or the National Association of Social Workers.

TIP: Update your list regularly—information goes out of date quickly.

Step Two: Get To Know Your List

Familiarize yourself with who is in the newsroom. Depending on the policies and practices of the particular media outlet, any one of the following might be a potential contact in the future. Familiarizing yourself with the individuals and their roles will help determine the best person to approach, how to make the approach and how to time the approach when you need it the most.

- √ **Editorial Boards** make operational and content decisions at a paper. The editor or editorial board establishes the overarching values and sets the tone for the rest of the newspaper.
- √ **Community Affairs Boards** are comprised of volunteers who offer commentary and opinions from a community perspective. Also called a Community Editorial Board, these groups are made up of local people from the circulation area of a newspaper that are involved in the community, through a wide variety of avenues. Such boards exist at many, but not all newspapers.
- √ **Managing Editors** oversee all other editors and operations.
- √ **Assignment Editors and Section Editors** coordinate and assign stories. These are the individuals who work most closely with reporters, and who often make decisions about which stories will be considered.
- √ **Calendar Editors** are responsible for listings of events and announcements.
- √ **Reporters** gather the news. They are responsible for researching and writing the news stories for print media. They can also propose story ideas, but they have to get approval before proceeding.
- √ **Freelance Writers/Photographers** make contributions but are not employees of the publication. Freelancers are used to "pitching" story ideas. A freelancer may consider stories for a broader audience that local reporters or media outlets would not consider.

In Broadcast Media, additional contacts include Public Affairs Directors, who are responsible for airing public service announcements at radio and TV stations, and Producers, who work closely with reporters to create and broadcast stories.

Step Three: Use Your List Effectively

Introduce yourself to the reporters, editors and producers who are responsible for stories on your issue, preferably before something bad happens. It is easier to cultivate a relationship when there isn't a pressing story or issue that needs attention. By preparing a media kit on sexual assault, or on your agency in general, you will have a tool for opening the doors of communication. Consider hand delivering your resource materials. Face to face contact is helpful for recognition and relationship building.

By getting to know the journalists' interests and needs, you can learn to meet those needs by providing appropriate and timely information to the appropriate people. Reporters will recognize your value as a credible, reliable source, and you are more likely to get better coverage of the issue by that individual and/or their newspaper. Developing a sense of trust will benefit both parties.

Staying connected with the media should be done regularly. Addressing a concern or coming in to a newsroom once or twice a year is just not enough. Below are some suggestions for staying in contact and how to best utilize your contact with journalists.

- √ **Approaching Editorial Boards**

  Because Editorial Boards include primary decision makers at a local newspaper, approaching one can provide a great opportunity to introduce new ideas or address concerns in your community. This is important for two reasons. First, operational policies and procedures can be influenced for future news stories and coverage of issues. Secondly, editorial comments can carry a lot of weight for local community members as well as their public policy-makers and elected officials. Consider political endorsements and funding issues as examples.

  Board members often write about issues in which they have a personal interest. Knowing this will help to identify who will be most receptive to discussing your issue. Using this information will also help guide your strategy for proposing an editorial or opinion piece, and convincing the board that they should support your issue.

  Procedures for contacting individual board members or submitting an issue for consideration will vary from outlet to outlet. Some boards encourage public participation at their regular meetings and welcome feedback and input from their readership. Other newspapers may request that appointments be scheduled in advance. For more information on meeting with Editorial Boards, see Appendix E.

- √ **Approaching Community Advisory Boards**

  Most Community Advisory Boards (CABs) consider policies and positions regarding the paper's expression of opinion. The board meets regularly to discuss issues of topical concern in the community, often meeting with proponents and opponents of particular initiatives. Input from the CAB may also sway what is addressed by the professional editorial board.

Some CAB members present their own views on issues of local importance on a regular basis. They write columns from their own perspective, bringing their individual experiences and new information to the newspaper audience on issues of local interest.

Both instances present a great opportunity for advocates and agencies to highlight or address a specific idea or issue that community members may not have prioritized in the past. You can often find out more about the board or its members by looking at the publication's Web site or simply reading their editorials or by-lined articles. By making a connection with an individual on the board, you can open a door to a whole new public discussion.

√ **Approaching Editors**

As noted above, editors carry a great deal of authority over what gets printed in their newspapers. Editors also make decisions on story assignments and topics, and can set the tone for how an issue is addressed. As with editorial boards discussions, meetings with individual editors can be scheduled and conducted in many different ways. Editors might be approached for many different reasons, the most important of which is to introduce yourself, your agency, and the services you provide to the community. The role of an editor will be discussed further in the next two sections: responding to media stories and "pitching" story ideas.

The other common means of contacting editors is through letters to the editor and Op-Ed pieces, which are written viewpoints presented from community members or guest columnists. "Surveys consistently show that letters are among the best-read parts of the paper." Rystrom, K. (1993) The Why, Who, and How of the Editorial Page (2nd ed.). State College, PA: Strata Publishing Co. Additional information on submitting letters or articles for the editorial page can be found in News for a Change, Wallack, et al.

√ **Approaching Reporters**

It is important to know which reporters are most likely to cover your issue. Outside the crime beat, sexual assault may be covered from a legislative perspective, (if new laws are passed or are being considered) or perhaps from a social services or health perspective in the "local" sections of newspapers. Feature departments or even general assignment reporters on the news desk may write stories about community safety when a big story breaks locally or elsewhere.

Become familiar with the reporter's work: what is the track record on this issue, what stories have they done well, what position is the reporter likely to take. Reporters will be impressed when you are familiar with their work, and will acknowledge you as a reader (constituent) as well as a potential resource.

> *"If you don't exist in the media, for all practical purposes, you don't exist."*
> Dan Schour, News Correspondent, National Public Radio.

Finally, Develop Yourself and Your Organization as the Expert

To gain respect as a reliable source for reporters and become someone they will turn to for stories, an organization must be able to do the following: know the arena (which journalist in which outlet will cover what range of stories) and be recognized as a prompt and accurate source. Steps have been described above that outline how to become a familiar name and face to the decision makers. Keep reminding journalists of your role as an expert by lobbying your contacts regularly in writing and on the phone. E-mail is an increasingly important resource as well. Keep yourself at the forefront in the minds of people who make writing and editing decisions. It keeps you accessible.

To be considered a reliable and accurate source, keep up on the most current sexual assault statistics, trends, and resources. As advocates, we have immediate access to this information (or know where to access it through the Michigan Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, the Sexual Assault Surveillance System (http://vip.msu.edu/sass) and various list-serves.) Most reporters don't know where to find this information.

TIP: When using statistics, always be able to reference the source for added credibility.

If the community considers you an expert, journalists will turn to you as a voice for the movement. Positioning yourself as the expert in the minds of the public is important as well. To do so, always provide information on your agency in any public forum, such as hotline numbers and where people can go to for help or to get additional information.

RESPONDING TO THE MEDIA

Knowing how your issue is being reported will determine how you want to improve or expand coverage. It also will help you gain access to media outlets. It will allow you to react in a timely manner when appropriate (when coverage is good, bad, or non-existent), and will better prepare you for proposing story ideas or inviting media to an event.

Monitoring Media Coverage

The basic reason for monitoring media coverage is to gather information. How is your issue being addressed in your community, or is it being addressed at all? This information will help determine what you might want to change about the media coverage, and will guide the decision on how to proceed with your communication plans. A list of suggested issues or topics to look for is included below.

√ **Have a plan**

As you determine what you are trying to learn, you will also need to determine your target. Are you concerned or interested in the major daily newspaper in your community, or perhaps the weekly community news?

Decide who is responsible for conducting the monitoring. Both the collection and analysis can be conducted by staff or volunteers. Clipping services are also helpful in gathering the news items for review. Consider partnering with a local school or university. There are many media watchdog organizations that might assist in gathering and studying the information as well.

TIP: Some agencies maintain a press log of all conversations with reporters (both agency & reporter initiated) and use it to track coverage.

√ **What To Look For In Monitoring The Media.**

The thought of reading and analyzing daily news coverage can seem daunting. It isn't if you prioritize what you want to learn. Ask yourself:

- What stories are being covered?
- Is your issue reported and where (what media outlet and section or department, i.e. crime beat, health, public safety, etc.)?
- Who are the reporters most often reporting on your issue?
- Who are the other spokespeople on your issue?
- Are other agencies or individuals writing letters to the editor or op-ed pieces?
- What are the themes and arguments presented on both sides of the issue?
- Are solutions to the problem presented?
- Who is named or implied as having responsibility for the problem?
- What's missing from news coverage on your issue?
- Is coverage of your issue or agency increasing or improving?
- What stories, facts, or perspectives could help improve the case for your side?
- Are there other issues being covered that relate to your issue?

√ **What do you do with the information once you have it?**

Now that you have collected information about your local media outlet, you want to take that information and use it to increase and improve the coverage of sexual assault in your community. These steps are helpful:

- Develop and update your media list with appropriate contacts
  If specific individuals tend to cover your issue, build a relationship/stay in contact.
  Determine which reporters might be worth approaching with story ideas.
- Recognize strengths, weakness and biases of individuals or their media outlets
  What are they typically supportive of?
  Is there a consistent style or approach?
- Decide what improvements are necessary in the coverage
  What information did you <u>not</u> want to see?
  What information did you <u>want</u> to see, but didn't?
- Decide if you want to create or expand coverage
  Use your communication planning skills to create a new or updated message.
  Respond to a current story or issue being covered.
  Frame issues or stories for the appropriate audience and/or medium
  Determine appropriate messages and message carriers (spokespeople).
  Determine potential newsworthiness of possible stories.

REACTING AND RESPONDING TO MEDIA STORIES

Sometimes news coverage is positive, and highlights the issue in a sensitive, informative manner. In these cases, it is important to give that feedback to the reporter and/or editor. Rather than complementing the reporter on a "good" story, however, be sure to comment on how fair, thorough, and interesting the story was. Praising the reporter for being balanced and objective will be well received. (Wallack, et al)

When the coverage is negative, or it is simply inaccurate or incomplete, follow-up and provide corrections or clarifications right away. This is especially important if there is a reporting error. The longer it takes for a correction to be made, the longer it is that the inaccuracies are circulating. Most newspapers have formal correction policies in place, and it is important to be familiar with your paper's process.

Steps in addressing negative, inaccurate, or incomplete coverage

√ First approach and have a discussion with the reporter who wrote the story

In initially addressing a problem, be inquisitive rather than accusatory. You may determine there was simply an editing or reporting problem. (Regular media monitoring will help determine if it was an isolated incident.)
Request a follow-up story or an opportunity to present a different view.
Individual journalists may or may not be compassionate by nature and may or may not be open to change. Operate, however, on the assumption that they share your goal of a safer community. Convincing them of the value of your information will have merit.

√ Gauge the Reaction

If the reporter isn't receptive to feedback, or if there was a glaring error or inaccuracy that is likely to go un-addressed, it may be necessary to discuss the issue with an editor or supervisor.
Keep in mind that the final version of a story is often out of the reporter's control. Changes can be made to a story after it is submitted, such as editing, graphics, or even language. Headlines and placement of a story are also determined after a story is submitted, usually during the layout process.

√ Talk to others in the news organization

It is acceptable to have a conversation with an editor or supervisor when a reporter is not receptive or is hostile to the feedback that is being provided.

√ When there is an institutional issue

If no one at the media outlet seems receptive to addressing your concerns, or if there is the need to highlight a problem for greater public understanding, there are steps that can be taken that can exert outside pressure. Newspaper management takes public sentiment very seriously regarding their choices of stories and their positions on issues. If public sentiment is negative, readership and advertising dollars are at stake. Communities have been known to rally behind an individual or organization after negative coverage. This might include boycotts of the paper or even its advertisers, and can affect how future stories are covered. The goal is to not let it get to that point. This is where developing a positive relationship with your news organization will be most helpful.

If a report contains inaccurate information, you can seek a correction. The process for doing this will vary depending on the media outlet. However, always start with the reporter, and move up the chain as necessary.

TAKING CALLS FROM THE MEDIA

Remember, all media calls must be answered. (Ignoring reporters won't make them go away, and will hurt your reputation as a news source.) A media protocol is usually established by organizations as a process for handling media calls. This process can be implemented as a tragic story is breaking, or when the neighborhood feature writer simply wants a quote about new legislation or curriculum. These or similar practices are likely in place in your organization. Become familiar with your agency's media response policy.

Agency Responsibilities

Be Prepared:

1) Have a media protocol plan in place identifying your key agency representatives, their roles, and the various scenarios that might develop.
2) Maintain an updated list of key people who may need to respond from inside and outside the agency.
3) Designate a spokesperson prior to a crisis (or inquiry) and make sure the staff knows the plan for reaching that person and the necessary alternates.
4) Keep a media log to track media calls and how they were handled.

Be Responsive:

1) Assess the situation.

2) Confirm necessary personnel are in place to address needs (individual, community, agency, media).
3) Determine key audiences for the message based on the crisis at hand.
4) Develop an appropriate message.
5) Brief the spokesperson.
6) Track all inquiries and what information was provided.

Be Diligent:

1) Follow up on promises.
2) Identify ways to avoid another crisis.
3) Evaluate your crisis performance by reviewing logs, clippings, and feedback.

Overall strategy for communicating in a crisis:

- *Be honest, accurate, and stress the facts*
- *Accept your share of responsibility for the problem*
- *Never respond to an attack with an attack*
- *Refute allegations succinctly*
- *Never speak "off the record"*
- *Know when to stop talking*

Guidelines for the Designated Spokesperson

Prepare yourself by knowing what to expect from the reporter. In other words, ask questions before you answer questions. These might include:

√ What is your story? (What is their position?)
√ Who else have you spoken to? (Are they individuals who are likely to agree or disagree with your stance?)
√ What do you need? (Stats? A good quote? A referral to another resource?)
√ What is your deadline? (Be responsive, but try to schedule time to think about your key messages before an interview.)

Reinforce your ability to provide timely and helpful information by respecting the reporter's deadline. It has been suggested that calls should be returned within 20 minutes. (Much longer than this, and the reporters won't feel that they are a priority to you. Make them a priority.) Being a credible source also means being responsive and helpful with statistics, information and/or referrals when necessary.

If you don't know the answer, don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Then find someone who does know. Be sure to follow up with additional information that is requested. Again, this adds to your credibility and helpfulness, and reinforces your role as "expert."

Avoid "no comment" answers. It implies you or your agency has something to hide. It is important to respond to reporters; however, it is ok to redirect the question. Bridge from what the reporter is asking by offering information on what you do want to say. For instance, a good transitional statement is "I do not have that information, what I do know is…" or "That's one point of you, let me give you another…"

APPROACHING THE MEDIA

Framing Your Stories and Key Messages

To use media effectively, we must be prepared to initiate (or pitch) a story idea, rather than simply react or respond to previous stories. Don't wait for reporters to call. Be proactive and call them with story ideas, with information for a story, or to give a statement or quote on an issue or story in development.

To gain access to the media and get journalists' attention for a pitch, you must first shape, or frame your story. The more newsworthy elements a news story contains and the an broader audience it can interest, the more likely it will be published.

Unfortunately, the aspects of sexual assault that have traditionally been found to be newsworthy are not representative of the most common scenarios. Studies have shown that the following elements will drive how and when sexual assault is covered in the media:

- Especially brutal or unusual assaults
- Patterned or serial rapes
- Sexual assaults where the victim was either very old or very young
- Sexual assaults that included other criminal aspects, such as kidnapping or murder

Source: Virgin or Vamp, Helen Benedict, Oxford University Press, 1992.

It is our responsibility as advocates to provide information that more accurately reflects the realities of the crime.

Journalists (especially editors) measure the value and newsworthiness of a potential story on the following factors:

- *Potential audience interest (who and how many will want to read or watch)*
- *Impact of issue (numbers affected, is there injustice or inequality)*
- *Celebrity (someone famous is involved, or willing to lend their name to the issue)*
- *Timeliness (linked to an historic event or milestone)*
- *Something unusual or unexpected (a breakthrough, controversy, or irony)*
- *Trendiness (seasonal or linked to "current" events)*

Steps in framing a story

√ **Identify newsworthy and timely information for stories.**
Tie in with news events of the day
Offer commentary on a controversy or conflict

Acknowledge local, national or topical milestones/anniversaries
(Examples: celebrity involvement, increased discussion of topic elsewhere, crisis center openings, 100th or 1 millionth crisis call, recent studies or data released, relation to other crime statistics)

√ **Localize the context of the story.**
Educate the audience (Explain why should they care)
Emphasize predictability and prevention
Adopt national reports and surveys for local use
(Examples: how does an "isolated" assault affect local residents, what curriculum or efforts are underway locally, what are local stats, prevalence)

√ **Clearly communicate the impact on your community.**
Translate individual problem to social issue (what is the "social math?")
Explain why there is or should be broad interest in the issue
Use symbols, metaphors, or visuals to make your case
(Examples: reflect the violent nature of sexual assault, what are economic costs of sexual assault, how many mothers, daughters, sisters are in danger)

"Social math is the term used to translate complicated data into terms that are easily understood and are interesting and tangible for the general public."
Matthew J. Cook, Department of Community Medicine, University of Connecticut Health Center

√ **Provide a human dimension to show how your story affects real people.**
Highlight irony or hypocrisy, injustice and unfair circumstances
Announce committee appointments and new personnel
Present an award or hold a contest
(Examples: survivor or family stories, arrest rate discrepancies, campus police procedures versus the general community, use of threats, force or other coercion, new board members or officer appointments, Women's Leadership Awards)

√ **Propose a solution or a call to action.**
Assign primary responsibility
Make funding, legislation or systems change recommendations
Suggest ways for individuals to help
(Examples: state your case, speak out when policies have been ignored, and make an appeal for volunteers to talk about support for survivors)

Respect that a reporter is trained to appear unbiased. They feel their job is to report the news, not interpret it.

Using the Media to Educate Policymakers
When an objective is organizational or systemic change, there are many players in moving forward a specific agenda. For a policymaker with decision-making responsibilities, there are many constituencies to address in the process. Through media advocacy, an organization can increase a policymaker's knowledge of an issue, and can help to facilitate informed decision-making.

"Media influences public opinion, which in turn, influences legislation and resource allocation." Charlotte Ryan, Boston College Media Research Action Project.

"A lot of editors think that most readers know about domestic violence or rape, so they would be more interested in writing a story that is different from what they think everyone knows. By coming up with really creative angles, you'll have a better chance of getting your message out through the media."
Kim Kozlowski, Reporter, Detroit News

What will attract a policy-maker's interest?
- What do they care about? (values, needs, aspirations, agenda)

Who do they listen to? (boss, staff, colleagues, constituency, the media)

What do they know about the issue?
- What is the policymaker's level of awareness?
- What is the interest level (what do they want to know)?
- What is the policymaker's current opinion of your issue or policy agenda?

What is the objective (what do we want done)?
- Is it an enforcement issue?
- Does an existing policy need revision?
- What are the barriers to implementation?
- Is it new or has it been done elsewhere?

Plan your strategy
- Name the key audiences
- Prioritize audiences and actions based on current and potential roles
- Select message and appropriate vehicle

CONSIDERING MEDIA REQUESTS FOR SURVIVOR INTERVIEWS

Survivors of sexual assault are of great interest to the media. During conversations with representatives of various Michigan newspapers, these journalists often stated that by interviewing survivors, or by putting a real name or face to an issue, their stories and coverage gain added credibility. However, most victims of crime are unclear about their role with the media.

The media can provide a forum for survivors to break their silence, and be heard by the public and other survivors, thereby reducing isolation and fostering empowerment. It also has the potential to re-victimize survivors and add to the intensity of their trauma through intrusive or insensitive reporting, or through the broadcast of hearsay or inaccurate facts.

As advocates, we have a duty to help educate survivors about their rights, as well as the risks and benefits of speaking publicly. The following issues should be discussed with a survivor and be considered before an interview is granted. Once fully informed, the final decision to speak with a reporter should always rest with the survivor.

Possible Risks to the Survivor

- Coverage of aspects of the victim's life that have no bearing on the crime
- Public identification placing physical and emotional well-being at risk
- Repeat victimization (emotionally or physically)
- Oversimplification, stereotypes, glamorization, sensationalism
- Compromising the criminal investigation and/or trial

Possible Benefits to the Survivor

- Empowerment
- Control
- Validation
- Potential for more sensitive and accurate coverage
- Holding perpetrator and/or systems accountable
- Encouragement of community support for victims or issue

Timeliness is essential, while fresh, creative angles to stories will get you far.

Additional examples of story ideas include: acquaintance versus stranger rape data, investigative stories on various forms of sexual assault, such as jail or prison assault or drug facilitated rape, consent or lack of consent.

Issues to address

Individual programs or organizations sometimes have guidelines for connecting survivors with reporters, and it is important to be familiar with these guidelines. For instance, some programs require a meeting between the reporter, the executive director and the counselor prior to any contact with a survivor. The following points are based on some of these agency guidelines. They may or may not be appropriate to every situation.

It is also important to remain accessible to the survivor, regardless of her decision to speak publicly. It may be necessary to intervene if the survivor begins to display signs of anxiety or emotional strain.

REMEMBER: No private citizen is ever obligated to speak with the press. Some crime victims find media attention helpful, beneficial, and in their interests. Others prefer privacy and shun the press.

Choosing privacy cannot guarantee that there will be no publicity about the survivor.

The press may still write about individuals even if they choose not to talk.
Journalists usually have several sources.

Statements can be made at any time by the survivor or by someone appointed by her.

The survivor may appoint a spokesperson to speak on her behalf
(Suitable candidates may include a family member, friend, attorney, religious leader, or victim advocate. However, be aware that if a counselor speaks to the press it may compromise confidentiality.)
If the survivor is not yet ready to speak publicly, she can do so in the future
Agreeing to one interview does not create any obligation to participate in others
An interview can be ended at any time

Propose setting some specific conditions for the interview. Reporters are not required to honor these requests, but are likely to try if it means "getting the story." They also want to cultivate new sources, and will not want to damage the possibility of working with someone in the future. Conditions may include:

Time and location of the interview
A specific reporter to conduct the interview
Who else will be present during the interview (such as an advocate or other support person for the survivor)?
Advance information about the general angle of the story
Opportunity to review questions ahead of time
Stipulating what questions can and can't be asked

CONSIDERING MEDIA REQUESTS FOR SURVIVOR INTERVIEWS—CONTINUED

Non-disclosure of interview location
Protection of identity
Whether or not other family members are interviewed, including children.

As with other layout and content decisions, editors (or producers for broadcast media) have the final say on how the story will look, and what conditions might be met. The published piece may not be the same as what was submitted by the reporter.

When should advocates discourage interviews?

- When advocates sense that the survivor is not emotionally prepared to go public.
- If the reporter's questions seem intrusive or inappropriate to the advocate.
- If there is a perceived insensitivity or ignorance of sexual assault issues.
- If a reporter (or a media outlet) has been insensitive to the issue in the past.
- If there are special circumstances in the survivors background.
- If there are negative implications for other family members or children.
- If there are circumstances that could affect the outcome of a trial, unless the survivor has been fully informed by legal counsel about the risks of an interview.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS: PREPARING STAFF, VOLUNTEERS OR SURVIVORS

The following tips are applicable for anyone who will be interacting with a media representative, and utilizes many of the concepts previously discussed.

Before the interview:

- Know the reporter, publication/program, interview format, audience
- Know the goal for the interview (what information will be gathered or shared)
- Gather any visuals or additional materials
- Jot down likely questions, and appropriate answers
- Prepare for a range of questions, both easy and difficult to answer
- Practice answering questions in front of others prior to the actual interview

Think of several quotable statements before the interview that emphasize your key points. This helps ensure the messages you want to communicate actually make it into the news story. It may be helpful to practice talking in "sound bites" to create a succinct message. Don't get bogged down with statistics. They can easily be misunderstood and can detract from your message. Decide what is most important to the public understanding of the issue.

Assume the reporter is out to do a fair, objective story. To that end, write down the names and phone numbers of one or two other people the reporter could interview and offer the list at the interview. If you have basic background information on the subject, offer it to the reporter, too. Your helpfulness won't be forgotten. Be prepared to supply contact and crisis information for the story. Providing the reporter with a business card is helpful to ensure that your name, affiliation, and appropriate information appear correctly.

Anticipate difficult questions and have positive answers ready. Don't allow a reporter's question to intimidate you. Remember, you're the expert. Practice delivering your messages in a clear, succinct way, and be prepared to shift the conversation back to your main message. If you are asked about a problem, talk about a solution. You have the opportunity to make recommendations. Finally, don't let false charges, facts, or figures offered by a reporter stand uncorrected.

Remember that everything you say is reportable. Don't say anything that you wouldn't want to see in the paper. There is no such thing as speaking "off the record."

For Telephone Interviews

Buy preparation time by asking to call the reporter back if deadline allows. Establish an "interview atmosphere" and mindset. Use notes. Ask questions in order to gain feedback.

Hold your calls until the interview is over. Phone calls interrupt the "flow" of the interview and provide a distraction you don't need. They also might reveal information to the reporter, both from the substance and tone of the phone conversation itself, if the reporter can hear you on a different line.

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Judy Benitez, Executive Director, Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault
Karen Jeffreys, Public Relations Director, Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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Debi Cain, Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board
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Jessica Grzywacz, Michigan Department of Community Health
Angelita Velasco Gunn, Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Kathy Hagenian, Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Sarah Heuser, Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board
Mary Keefe, M.S.W., Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Tammy Lemmer, Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
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Patricia Smith, Michigan Department of Community Health
Joyce Wright, Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board

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Al Wilson, Eaton Rapids Community News

Working with the Media: A Toolkit for Service Providers, was compiled and developed by Tammy Lemmer, MCADSV Special Projects Manager. The project was funded by the Michigan Department of Community Health through a supplement to Grant # U17/CCU522265-01 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Layout and design by Jenefer O'Dell.

APPENDIX A: RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

The Response to Sexual Assault: Removing Barriers to Services and Justice, The Report of the Michigan Sexual Assault Systems Response Task Force, Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Michigan Resource Center On Domestic and Sexual Violence, 3893 Okemos Rd, Ste B2,
Okemos, MI 48864, (517) 381-4663, fax (517) 347-1060, www.mcadsv.org/mrcdsv

Berkeley Media Studies Group, Berkeley, CA http://www.bmsg.org

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Denver, CO http://www.ccasa.org/programs/index.cfm/Media%20Advocacy

Communication Planning, Fenton Communications http://www.fenton.com/resources/default.asp

"Effective Media Relations and Communication Planning," CDC training conference held August 28-29, 2003, Washington D.C.

"Making Health Communication Programs Work," US Department of Health and Human Services: http://cancer.gov/pinkbook

Media Advocacy Guide, California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 1215 K Street, Suite 1100, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone (916) 446-2520, www.calcasa.org

"Media Matters" Training Institute, Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, June 5-7, 2002, Providence, RI.

Media Resource Guide, 1987, David A. McElwee, Foundation for American Communications

News For A Change, An Advocate's Guide to Working With The Media, Wallack, Lawrence, Katie Woodruff, Lori Dorfman, Iris Diaz, 1999 Sage Publications

"Pfizer's Views Making News" On-line Resource for Health Advocacy Organizations,
www.viewsmakingnews.com/resources/content_library.shtml#newspapers

Privacy and Dignity, Crime Victims and the Media, 2000 National Center for Victims of Crime.

Toolkit for Preventing Violence Against Women, National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women and the Violence Against Women Office, http://toolkit.ncjrs.org/

Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes, Benedict, Helen, Oxford University Press, 1992.

"Who Decides What's News?" Judy Benitez, Executive Director, Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault CDC Media Conference, Los Angeles, CA, March 2002

CONTACTS

The following individuals have experience at many different levels of working with victims and the media issues. Their area of expertise follows their contact information.

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Previous member of the Michigan Sexual Assault Systems Response Task Force and noted expert on victims and the media issues.

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Coordinator of the Kent County Sexual Assault Prevention Action Team, works to provide information to the press about sexual assault.

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GRIID provides media education workshops for parents, teachers, and community groups, in addition to conducting research on Grand Rapids media.

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APPENDIX B: MEDIA ADVOCACY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Media Advocacy for Nonprofit Organizations

resources compiled by the

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www.mcadsv.org/mrcdsv

THE ACTIVIST COOKBOOK: CREATIVE ACTIONS FOR A FAIR ECONOMY. Boyd, Andrew. Boston, Massachusetts: United for a Fair Economy, 1999.

A great resource for helping organizations and activists think creatively about media events and involving artists in their work.

GUIDE TO GETTING GOOD MEDIA COVERAGE. Michigan Nonprofit Association. East Lansing, MI: Michigan Nonprofit Association, 2001.

Guide to Getting Good Media Coverage includes the following "How To's": putting together an effective press list, writing an effective press release, producing and airing a Public Service Announcement, and using cable television.

HOW TO TELL AND SELL YOUR STORY: A GUIDE TO MEDIA FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS AND OTHER NONPROFITS. Center for Community Change. Washington, D.C.: Center for Community Change, 1999. www.communitychange.org.

Includes valuable information on how to plan a media campaign, bring attention to your group's work or issue, stage a press conference, write a press release, write and place "op-eds," and influence editorials.

MAKING THE NEWS: A GUIDE FOR NONPROFITS AND ACTIVISTS. Salzman, Jason. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998.

Making the News offers nonprofits and activists practical advice on creating a media list, developing a simple message, generating news coverage, handling unsolicited media coverage, and becoming an expert on your issue. Excellent resource for developing a media response plan for your organization.

MEDIA OUTREACH MADE EASY: AN ADVOCATE'S GUIDE TO WORKING WITH THE PRESS. Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Harrisburg, PA: The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 1999. www.vawnet.org.

Media Outreach Made Easy was created primarily to assist advocates working to end domestic violence; however, it can be adapted for use by advocates working on related issues. Its sections focus on: preparing a media list, preparing for interviews, responding to media stories, generating coverage, and how to place a public service announcement. Appendices include a media terminology list, a sample media alert, a sample op-ed, and a sample news release.

MEDIA RESOURCE GUIDE. McElwee, David. Los Angeles, California: Foundation for American Communications, 1987.

This study guide will help organizations through the basics of media relations and provide discussion of more specific problems and issues. The goal of the *Media Resource Guide* is to help organizations to identify themselves as sources of information, which will be valued by news people as media resources.

NEWS COVERAGE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: ENGENDERING BLAME. Meyers, Marian. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1997.

This original work demonstrates the troubling evidence that news coverage in American cities routinely depicts criminal violence against women differently than violence against men. This book discusses this tendency and how it perpetuates traditional, inegalitarian stereotyping of both men and women.

APPENDIX B: MEDIA ADVOCACY BIBLIOGRAPHY

NEWS FOR A CHANGE: AN ADVOCATE'S GUIDE TO WORKING WITH THE MEDIA. Wallack, Lawrence. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1999.

This book serves as a blueprint for those wanting to increase the power and effectiveness of their social change efforts. Each chapter is packed with basic principles, practical suggestions, clear examples, and specific tips to help put the power of the news media to work for social change.

PICTURING A LIFE FREE OF VIOLENCE: MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. Drezin, Jenny. Baltimore, MD: The United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2001.

Picturing a Life Free of Violence looks at media campaigns from around the world and the unique approaches taken to convey a message. The compilation of campaign strategies featured in this book is part of an electronic database available from the Media/ Materials Clearinghouse of Johns Hopkins University's Center for Communication Programs.

PRIVACY AND DIGNITY: CRIME VICTIMS AND THE MEDIA. National Center for Victims of Crime. Arlington, Virginia: National Center for Victims of Crime, 2000.

A unique handbook for service providers to help crime victims navigate the onslaught of media attention that accompanies many, particularly high profile, crimes. Provides practical guidance on interacting with the media, building effective media relations, giving successful media interviews, setting boundaries, and much more.

PUBLIC OUTREACH TOOLS AND TACTICS. Domestic Violence Awareness Project. Washington, D.C.: PR Solutions, 1996-7.

Materials designed to help battered women's advocates plan events, reach out to their communities, and generate publicity during October (Domestic Violence Awareness Month) and throughout the year. Includes information on organizing, media and media terminology, talking points and messages, press/news release samples, etc.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH RESOURCE BOOK. National Sexual Violence Resource Center. Enola, PA: NSVRC, 2001.

Provides guidelines, tips, and strategies to state sexual violence coalitions, local rape crisis centers, colleges, and others interested in public awareness and education activities that highlight and prevent sexual violence.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR NONPROFITS. Kirkman, Larry and Loeb, Robert. Washington D.C.: Benton Foundation & Center for Strategic Communication, 1992.

Strategic Communications for Nonprofits is a series of nine guides to media and communications techniques and technologies for nonprofit leaders. The titles of the publications in the series are: Talk Radio, Voice Programs, Op-Eds, Using Video, Media Advocacy, Cable Access, Electronic Networking, and Strategic Media.

STRATEGIC MEDIA: DESIGNING A PUBLIC INTEREST CAMPAIGN. Women's Voices Project. Lansing, MI: Communications Consortium Media Center, 1992.

This workbook was written for organizations beginning to build a press operation as well as for those who already have a working relationship with the media. The four sections in the workbook include: strategic media, tools of the trade, charts and checklists, and resources worth reading. This book describes press strategies, media systems, and new technologies for reaching reporters and media decision makers.

WHY BAD ADS HAPPEN TO GOOD CAUSES AND HOW TO ENSURE THEY WON'T HAPPEN TO YOURS. Goodman, Andy. Santa Monica, CA: Cause Communications, 2002.

In this visually pleasing, thorough text, Goodman offers a substantial overview of the fundamental elements of creating good ads. Includes discussion of layout, graphics, and copy for your nonprofit advertisements and other communications. Ideas are illustrated with examples from recently circulated nonprofit ads.

APPENDIX C: COMMUNICATION PLANNING PROCESS

√ **Name the key Audiences (The "Who")**
Who do you need to reach to meet your goal?
Who has the power to make a necessary change?
Each audience has its own distinctive characteristics.
There are primary and secondary audiences, and the message needs to be tailored to each.

√ **Identify what you want the audiences to do (The "What")**
What is the problem or issue?
What message are you sending? What information does the audience need to know?
What is the desired result? Is the message proactive or reactive?
Test the message for comprehension, appeal, personal connection, believability, acceptability, and behavioral intent. (How will people to react?)

√ **Tactics for reaching the audience (The "How")**
What tools can you use to get your message to your audience?
Targeted/direct approach can include phone calls, fliers, and mailings.
Indirect approach includes mass media, advertisements.
Plans should include non-traditional vehicles such as Web sites and wire services.
In your plan, only include tactics you have the resources to do.
Determine the best timing for the individual audience, and repeat the message often.

√ **Evaluating your message**
Have you been successful in reaching desired audiences with the intended message?

Formative Evaluation: This is conducted during your communication program development and is used to pretest messages and materials with the intended audiences (focus groups can be used). Pilot testing is also considered formative evaluation.

Process Evaluation: This includes assessments of whether materials are being distributed to the right audiences and in the right amount, whether and to what extent program activities are occurring, and other measures of how the program is working or how well it is being understood. An example would be using return postcards with print materials to identify how respondents are using the materials. Process evaluation involves the bean counting-tracking media coverage, monitoring Web site hits, and tracking calls, for example.

Outcome or Summation Evaluation: This is used to assess the degree to which your communication objectives are being achieved by measuring changes in knowledge, attitudes, intentions or actual behavior. A randomized controlled trial would be the best example, but is usually not possible with communication programs, because you cannot completely limit exposure. For example, you would have people not exposed to the communication (control group) and people who were exposed (treatment group) and compare their understanding or awareness of the issue.

APPENDIX D: MEETING WITH EDITORIAL BOARDS

Depending on the newspaper, scheduling a meeting with the editorial board can be as simple as picking up the phone to call the editor or as complex as sending a formal letter of request to the board, which then reviews the requests. Be prepared to explain your position and, if possible, tie your subject into an issue currently making headlines. Tell the editor of the timeliness of your issue, as well as its interest to, and impact on their readers. If you call, be prepared for the editor to ask for information in writing. Follow up with a letter and a packet of information about your organization and your issue of concern. It is helpful to board members to have background on an issue, and to know who is going to be attending the meeting.

Once a meeting date is secured, remember to confirm by telephone the scheduled appointment a day or two before your meeting. To ensure the meeting runs smoothly, select no more than three people to attend the meeting. Also, identify what role each participant will play. One member should serve as the leader and be responsible for opening the meeting, making introductions, re-focusing the discussion if it veers off track, and closing the meeting.

Generally speaking, newspaper editors will allow you to make a statement and then ask you a lot of questions. Be as prepared as you can about your issue, and try to link it to broader community concerns. For greatest impact, an association should provide statistics about how many people in that particular community or industry are directly affected by the issue. Invite a representative of the community being served or affected to speak, as it can be very powerful. As with any interview, if you or any of your representatives are faced with questions you can't answer, simply tell the board you will send the information as soon as possible.

Following the meeting, always send a thank you that includes any additional relevant information about your issue. The editorial board will then research the merits of your position, as well as those of your opponents. If the newspaper then decides to take a position, it may take some time before the editorial actually appears. During the next few weeks, watch for the editorial.

* If you receive positive editorial support, send copies of the editorial to your legislators and other influential policymakers. You can also include it in your next direct mail solicitation and place a copy of it on your Web site to reach even more potential supporters. Be sure to write a thank you to the editorial board for their support.

* If the editorial board supports your opponent's position, send a letter-to-the-editor of the newspaper expressing your disappointment and framing your issue in the community's long-term interest. Restate statistics on how many people in your community are affected by your issue. Include any new information that supports your position.

Adapted from an article by Candice Warltier, appearing in the Association Forum of Chicagoland.

APPENDIX E: STATEWIDE SURVEY OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY JOURNALISM PROGRAMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conducted for the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Media Workgroup Project, Summer 2003

The idea for a survey of college Journalism Departments developed from a recommendation in the 2001 Report of the Michigan Sexual Assault Systems Response Task Force. The purpose of the report was to identify and address systems issues that create barriers to comprehensive service to survivors of sexual assault. In relation to sexual assault prevention education, media was identified as a "powerful force" in effecting social change. However, without accurate information and appropriate training, sexual assault can be one of the most difficult stories a journalist has to cover. In the report, it was suggested that "education be provided to journalism students on the realities of sexual assault and how to interview victims." This survey was conducted in order to establish a baseline of information on what Journalism Departments are or are not providing for their students on this topic. These findings, and the concept of working with Michigan's Journalism Programs, are being considered as part of the long-term goals of MCADSV and the Media Advisory Group.

An independent survey was conducted with 13 journalism program faculty members from colleges and universities across the state of Michigan. The primary goal of the survey was to ascertain if and how journalism programs train students on issues concerning sexual violence. Michigan State University was not included in the initial surveys because it was already documented that they provide extensive training to MSU journalism students through the Victims and the Media Program. While not formally included in this report, Bonnie Bucqueroux, the Victims and the Media program director, was interviewed for the purpose of comparison, and her comments are included.

At 12 of the 13 schools, telephone interviews were completed with the faculty member who regularly teaches the core journalism courses, such as news writing, reporting, journalism ethics or the journalism practicum (writing for the student paper). Interviews contained specific questions about the structure of the program, the instruction that students receive on reporting on victims of sexual assault, if specific victim issues were addressed with students, and the faculty and/or program's willingness to receive training or resources on victim's issues from MCADSV.

At the remaining school, an interview was completed with the faculty advisor of the student newspaper. A section was added to this interview to address that individual's role as advisor, as well as the training offered to the paper's staff and the paper's policy on reporting the names of victims.

Following are the results from the survey:

- Journalism program faculty address reporting on victims with their students in a broad manner.
  - There is a wide spectrum of opinions on how important victim issues are to the curriculum.
  - As little as one hour per semester is spent on the topic at some schools.
- Instructors cover various topics in their general presentation of such broad victim issues as theft, natural disasters, and accidents. Topics include:
  - Sensitivity to the victim
  - Minimizing harm
  - The use of victim's names
  - Privacy protection
  - The need to avoid revictimization.
- Sexual assault is occasionally addressed as a specific form of victim's reporting.
  - Only two of twelve faculty members responded that sexual assault is regularly addressed in their classes.
  - Discussion of sexual assault is typically student-initiated.
    - Students bring in news stories that discuss sexual assault or introduce the topic during class discussion.
    - Some students elect to fulfill their class writing assignment by reporting on a rape case or by writing a feature story or opinion piece on sexual assault.
  - Faculty members address sexual assault to varying degrees in their classes and through a variety of methods. These include:
    - Class exercises requiring students to write a story on sexual assault
    - Assigned reading and class discussion on journalism law and ethics.
    - Discussion of local or national news stories regarding sexual assault.
    - Sharing their own experience as a reporter covering rape cases.

APPENDIX E: STATEWIDE SURVEY OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY JOURNALISM PROGRAMS

- Most faculty members said that their greatest weakness is failing to devote sufficient time to issues of reporting on victims.
- All of the interviewees expressed interest in receiving assistance from MCADSV. The following types of assistance were commonly recommended:
  - Written materials with information on sexual assault.
  - Videotapes illustrating victim's experiences with the media.
  - Guest speakers with information for students on reporting on victims of sexual assault.
  - Workshop, conference or retreat for faculty, students and local reporters

The Michigan State University Journalism department offers students instruction on reporting on victims throughout their course of study, and routinely have access to the items listed above. In fact, the department guarantees that the students will receive training on reporting on trauma and catastrophe through its Victims and the Media Program. This program, perhaps the only one like it in the country, provides in-class instruction, support to faculty, outreach to professional journalists and assistance to victims and victim advocates.

It appears that there is room for significant improvement in how Journalism Departments in Michigan prepare future journalists in working with victims of sexual assault. It is encouraging to note that faculty members generally acknowledge this, and seem open and receptive to new ways of addressing victim issues. They also identified several forms of assistance that could help them improve, including written materials, workshops or conferences for faculty, and guest speakers. MCADSV is also considering this information in light of the agency's long-term goals, and is pleased that this project may present an opportunity for new partnerships.