



CALCASA
CALIFORNIA COALITION
AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

Media Advocacy Guide

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Introduction

As a coalition we are inundated with media and media requests about the issue of rape. The relationship between CALCASA member agencies and local media ranges anywhere from very close and collegial to non-existent or fearful. This guide should help to bridge gaps where they exist, to help build capacity for those who have not gone down that path, or as an additional resource for those who have developed media plans.

As our members work with local media, CALCASA hopes to demystify the process of media advocacy and share with our members the lessons we have learned.

Section 1: Prioritizing Media

Media is central to our work. As advocates one of our foundational principles is the belief that violence against women is a social problem, not a biological one. So with that in mind feminists for decades have looked into how this problem is fixed into our society. Time and time again, advocates have noticed that the representation of violence against women in the media has created a supportive environment for those same behaviors in our community.

Why work with the media?

Media advocacy is victim advocacy. The term “media advocacy” sounds scary, but it is the same type of work you do everyday in the schools, counseling sessions, meetings and more, the type of advocacy just has a different set of rules. Media advocacy is a way of talking to your entire community about sexual violence. People watch the news, read various papers, online media and their opinions are shaped by what they see and read. The media is a tool advocates can use to start conversations that are responsible and complex.

Media advocacy
is victim advocacy.

Sexual assault victim advocates can engage media for the very thing that it is good for; instilling values in our society and informing our community.

That is not to say that this guide will try to tackle all of the ills in contemporary media, but rather that we see media as a tool for socialization and education (good, bad and indifferent) and we hope to harness that tool in ways that drive our advocacy toward a world free from sexual violence.

There are two common ways for organizations to gain visibility through media:

- Advertising
- Public Relations (PR)

On one hand, advertising is a way to generate a consistent branding, message and appeal across wide audiences. It is typically costly, and requires resources we often don't have in our organization (such as advertising and marketing specialists).

PR on the other hand is something that, when planned strategically, is an integral part of our organization. Good PR strategies can be flexible, they can have broad scalability, and any organization can attain a modicum of success, regardless of the level of resources available. We tend to look at PR as the place you can get the “most bang for your buck.”

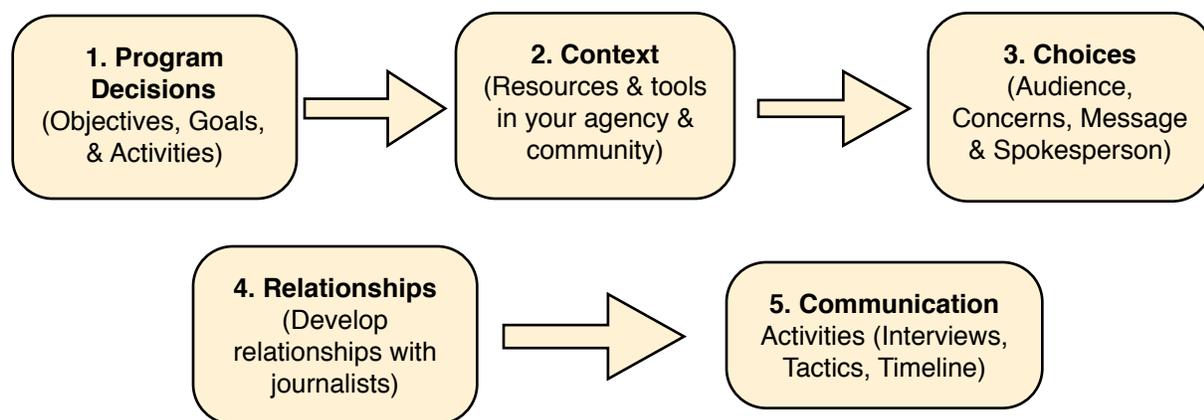
For the purposes of this guide, we will refer to these activities as “media advocacy.” We choose this label consciously, as it represents both the forum in which we work (the

media, in all its flavors), and our job in that forum (to advocate our position). You will find that this approach is very consistent with traditional PR approaches, but takes into consideration the resource limitations we are often faced with, along with the philosophical issues that we are trying to articulate in our communities. Like any good advocate, our media advocacy must be flexible, thoughtful, and strategic.

1.1 How does media advocacy work?

Media advocacy begins with a strategic planning process. In practice, it consists of developing content for the media and in turn developing relationships with its agents. Media includes traditional media such as print and broadcast journalism, as well as new media such as internet publications, social networking, and mobile media. Gone are the days where PR referred only to sending out press releases and having news conferences. In today's media market -- and particularly for non-profits -- we need to have a broader understanding of how to engage media in as many forms as we can and seek new opportunities not only for viability but for interaction with our community.

Strategic Planning Process



Organizations can use media to communicate core messages to their community. Along with community education programs this can be one of the single most important ways to interact with the community in attempts to effect change. Media advocacy will also include creative social marketing strategies that accomplish fundamental goals of any organization including branding, fundraising and creating a context for understanding sexual violence in our communities.

To better understand PR we have to understand those who are creating content (eg. the journalists, internet resources, etc.). This is one of the first steps in developing media literacy, a core skill in developing PR strategies. So to do this we suggest that you strive to become an active consumer of media -- that you analyze and evaluate media and you actively seek out media that suits your needs. Watch television news and listen to the radio with the same focus. Surf the Internet for online news and up-to-the-minute

information on breaking stories. Become a news hound with a voracious appetite to be in the know. The Internet is also a valuable resource for identifying potential partners. Investigate organizations with similar interests and look for best practices to maximize your efforts and resources.

In sum, public relations is your pathway into the media and will be the process for how you get your issue covered, how you shape the public discussion, and how you educate your community.

This guide will help you develop the basic components of a media and PR strategy. We hope you will be able to use this as a resource for planning, training, and reference as you continue to work towards building your agency as a vibrant voice in your community.

SECTION 2: Creating a Communications Plan

2.1 Planning

Developing a media plan is an important step in your strategic plan. This plan (sometimes refers to or includes a media protocol) will help determine your message and the specific audience to target. For organizations trying to do PR work without a plan “it’s like traveling to a specific destination without a map. That route may be scenic, but you’ll cast about indefinitely without getting any closer to your goal” (W.K. Kellogg Foundation).

With that in mind, let’s put together the fundamentals of a media plan. Such a plan will be constructed with strategic communications goals and objectives. It requires a concerted effort among your staff, board members, and others to consider those goals and objectives, along with specific activities to achieve them. Just as your organization's overall strategic plan is a critical component for organizational success, so is your media and communications plan essential for success.

Objective: Where you want to be...	Goal: How to get there...	Activity: What you want to do...
Broad objectives that we hope to achieve through our media advocacy.	Measurable outcomes that indicate successful approaches to achieving stated objectives.	Programs or actions chosen in an effort to achieve stated goals.
<i>Example: Community education and engagement on the issues of sexual violence.</i>	<i>Example: Local media have the resources to cover the issues. It is important to give reporters the context to represent this issue without perpetuating common myths and misperceptions, and generalizations.</i>	Develop background sheet, stat-pack and contact info for advocates. Distribute to local media.
		Comment on local stories and offer to be a resource to journalists covering the issue.

Objective: Where you want to be...	Goal: How to get there...	Activity: What you want to do...
	<i>Example: Increased visibility for the agency that aligns them with other vital community services.</i>	Connect with local taskforces, committees and workgroups related to public safety or other core services.
		Take part in local and statewide activities such as MyStrength, Denim Day or Sexual Assault Awareness Month events.
<i>Your objective:</i>	<i>Goal #1:</i>	<i>Activity #1:</i>
		<i>Activity #2:</i>
	<i>Goal #2:</i>	<i>Activity #1:</i>
		<i>Activity #2:</i>

Objective: What you want to do?

Lewis Carroll said, "If you don't know where you are going, every road leads you there." The good news is you have started the planning process. Start thinking and talking about your broad objectives, goals and activities with your agency colleagues.

Good communications efforts are rooted in a vision for change. What is your ambitious objective for changing the world and how can the media help you meet this objective?

The core vision of your work sets the tone for communication efforts, thereby informing your strategy and activities.

Achieving your vision is a long-term objective and it can be difficult to create a long-term communications plan because the political and/or community environment can change dramatically in a few years, or less. Creating short-term communications strategies, from 18-20 months, is recommended by many organizations. Breaking up your vision into smaller segments will enable you to achieve your long-term objectives. Creating your strategic communications plan with this in mind will help your effort.

Goal: How to get there...

Supporting your organizational vision through solid communication strategies is an important step in planning. Considering your goals is the next step in your overall plan. Objectives are broad outcomes that we hope to achieve through our media advocacy. For instance, an objective would be *community education and engagement on the issues of sexual violence*.

Examining your vision will help you establish goals. Goals are concrete measurable outcomes that indicate successful approaches to achieving stated objectives. For example, measuring the goal *community education and engagement on the issues of sexual violence* could be accomplished by having local media cover issues relating to sexual violence in your community.

Activity: Where you want to be...

After reviewing your goals and objectives, think about where you want to be and what activities your agency want to engage in or facilitate. For instance, to meet your objectives and goals in the table above you could:

- Develop a background sheet, stat-pack and contact information for advocates and distribute it to local media;
- Comment on local stories and offer to be a resource to journalists covering the issue;
- Connect with local a taskforce, committees and workgroups related to public safety or other core services;
- and take part in local and statewide activities such as MyStrength, Denim Day or Sexual Assault Awareness Month events.

Spokesperson

It is important to identify a media spokesperson for your organization. All media calls should be directed toward this individual and your agency should have a media plan in place that clearly identifies your key agency representative, their roles and various scenarios that might develop.

Process for Managing Media Calls



Since your official media spokesperson may not always be available to respond to media requests, it is important to have a back-up plan or alternative spokesperson in place. The media spokesperson can rely on staff to help field calls from the media, keep track of news-stories, and help return media calls in a timely fashion.

Creating a Media List

An important part of your research and record-keeping should be the development of a database of skilled journalists. If you read an article or see a report with an accurate portrayal of sexual assault, be sure to contact the reporter and express your appreciation for the good coverage a complex issue.

You may also choose to call reporters after sending out news releases to ask them if they are interested in further information for a story. You can suggest meeting briefly in order to discuss your organization and pitch story ideas. The worst they can do is say no.

Questions to consider when contacting journalists:

1. **What do you want to accomplish?** i.e. Increase awareness among target audience about sexual assault services and programs by generating news stories in target media.
2. **What story ideas and angles are options?** i.e. Leverage timely trends, seasons, holidays, high profile sexual assault incidents in the press.
3. **What resources are available to you?** i.e. time, money, staff, events.
4. **What is your timeline?** Including distribution of media material and regular briefings and updates with key reporters.
5. **What is your intended reach?** i.e. city, county, state and type of media like print, radio, TV, web sties, wire services, etc.

You can create a thorough media list by watching local news broadcasts, listening to the radio and reading local or regional print publications. For example, you can have an intern read and watch the news for a month and note where stories about sexual violence are likely to show up and start identifying reporters and give examples of media stories.

When creating the media list, always include station or publication information, a contact name, their title, direct phone number, fax number and any other pertinent information.

Surveying your constituents (like survivors, collaborators, board members, etc.) is another great way to find out what media outlets they use. Keep in mind that your messages may vary from audience to audience.

Be aware of non-traditional media sources like school newspapers, church flyers, college papers, newsletters, blogs and more. You can also reach out to others to help build this list (for instance, your Board, allies, and consultants). Remember to keep your list updated.

2.2 Proactive Communication

As a rape crisis center you provide a vital service in your community. Although, a great deal of the work we do is in “crisis” some of the most important work that we do is simply promoting our service and educating communities. This is inherently *proactive* work.

Advocates, therefore, must not only be prepared to respond to stories but should also be prepared to pitch stories in a proactive fashion. As community members you have an essential role in helping to document the health and safety (or lack thereof) of victims and survivors in your community.

Framing your stories is an essential component to using the media effectively.

Framing your stories is an essential component to using the media effectively. The broader the audience and the more newsworthy elements a story contains, the more likely the story will be published.

As advocates we know that media reports of sexual assault often represent either the minority of cases or they serve to promote common myths. You are more likely to see stories covered in the media that are:

- Especially brutal or unusual assaults
- Patterned or serial rapes
- Sexual assault where victims are elderly or children
- Sexual assault that included other criminal aspects, such as kidnapping or murder

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

Below are some questions to ask yourself to help you strategically frame your story:

Step 1: Is the information newsworthy and timely?

- Link your story to current events
- Speak out on controversial issues that affect victims and survivors
- Acknowledge local, national or topical milestones/anniversaries.
- **Examples:** celebrity involvement, increased discussion of topic elsewhere, crisis center openings, recent studies or data released, relation to other crime statistics.

Media advocacy is a way of talking to your entire community about sexual violence.

Step 2: Is the story local? What is the context of the story?

- Educate the audience (explain why they should 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 statistics, prevalence.

Step 3: Has the impact on your community been communicated clearly?

- Translate individual problems to social issues
- Explain why there is or should be broad interest in the issue
- Use symbols, metaphors, or visuals to make your case
- **Example:** reflect the violent nature of sexual assault, what are the economic costs of sexual assault.

Step 4: Is a human dimension discussed in the story? How does this issue affect real people?

- Highlight irony or hypocrisy, injustice or unfair circumstance
- 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.

People watch the news, read various papers, online media and their opinions are shaped by what they see and read.

Step 5: Is it feasible to offer solutions within the story 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

SECTION 3: Reactive / Crisis Communications

For many of us our interaction with the media happens when they call requesting a comment on a breaking news story. Just like proactive communications this is an important opportunity to promote accurate and timely information. Unlike proactive communications, which occur on our schedule and by our doing, reactive communications often catches us off-guard, unprepared, and unsure of what to say. Despite these challenges some thoughtful planning in advance can help any rape crisis center prepare the fundamental content for any one of these calls.

3.1 Framing your message

Framing is an essential part of making sure your media response stays on the mark. Many news stories start out with an opportunity to inform the public or correct misperceptions, but may end up with an advocate stuck in the position of defending a victims actions, protecting privacy, or struggling to get out a message.

One way to navigate this obstacle in advance is to find out what “angle” a reporter is taking on a story. The angle on the story is effected by the people being interviewed, the type of information being reported, and what the reporter believes is newsworthy about the issue. Most reporters are willing to share this information with prospective interviewees. Take advantage of the opportunity before your interview to find out who else the reporter has spoken to and what kind of angle they are taking on the story. This will give you insight into potential pitfalls, myths, or misinformation that you will want to be prepared to clarify.

Many of the skills you need for successful reactive communications are referred to in Section 6: “When the News Media Call.”

Some tips to consider include:

- Having a plan in place before problems arise. This will allow a quickly response to the situation
- Designate one person to speak with the media and other audiences.
- Identifying the audiences who want information about a specific situation, including internal audience
- Obtain input for all staff to formulate a crisis plan

Some reactive communications are what we called “crisis communications.” This is an event that is so controversial, so egregious or so central to the activities of a community or rape crisis center that it creates it’s own media storm. Crisis communications typically leave an organization totally overwhelmed and unable to respond quickly enough if at all. Some situations in which we may find ourselves reacting in a crisis communications

mode include allegations of wrong doing on the part of staff or board members, local officials, or volunteers.

Thoughtful planning in advance (See Section 2) can help any rape crisis center prepare the fundamental content for anyone of the crisis situations mentioned above.

SECTION 4: Message Communication

4.1 Message

Good messaging is not accidental. Very few of us naturally speak in ways that flow with the rhythm, order and precision demanded by today's media. In order to capture the media's attention it is important to "hook" into timely or engaging conversations about the issue, and construct messages that express the ideas, mission, or campaign goals of the organization in a clear and concise manner. For instance a media hook could be Denim Day, a gala, the issuing of a new report, etc.

Hooks can help you catch a reporter's attention and make stories more newsworthy. They can be included in the framing of a story in a way that expands the significance of the news.

Messages that your organization chooses to develop will depend on your communication goals and target audience. This may include:

- 1) Getting coverage of a specific campaign or issue
- 2) Educating the community about your organization's services
- 3) Or responding publicly to a local occurrence

Whereas each of these goals focuses on local events and services, you may also choose to construct your message based on an incident, campaign or event of regional, statewide or national recognition. Creating messages that link into broader stories can give journalists an opportunity to cover your agency.

4.2 How to develop your messages--WIFM

At best, the majority of viewers/readers/listeners will only consume our message for a fraction of a minute. Therefore, conceptualize your messages in terms of what points people should take away from that moment. This means you will have one or two key points covered in your messages. Messages should be:

- 1) Focused on a specific topic--don't try to force everything you've ever wanted to say into one talking point
- 2) Consistent with your previous messages--repetition is a key component of making your message heard
- 3) Based on your communication strategy--always remember the bigger picture and ensure that each message fits into your strategy
- 4) Targeted for your audience--remember who you are talking to, what their values are, and why they should be listening to what you have to say

Another way to ensure that your message will have a clear takeaway for your audience is by placing yourself in their shoes and asking: "What's in it for me?" Sometimes media

trainers refer to this as “the radio station that everybody listens to: WIFM” (the listener friendly version of “**WSIC-Why Should I Care?**”) It is a nice nemonic device that reminds us to consistently reflect on whether or not our message is actually addressing the needs of our audience, whether they are informational, entertainment or educational.

Tips to Consider

1. Who will be speaking on what issues?

- One spokesperson for the whole organization or key individuals on certain issues
- What are you top three messages?

2. Is your media list tailored to your issue?

- You may consider having multiple media lists (e.g. crime and safety, fundraiser, policy)

3. How will you know when you have been successful?

- Identify markers in order to evaluate success (ie. are the stories accurate, spokesperson quote, messages communicated)

4. What is the right vehicle for your message?

- Choose print, radio and TV based on the audience segment they reach.
- Don't leave out non-traditional vehicles such as targeted web sites and the wire services
- Don't forget social networking sites, like MySpace, Facebook and Twitter

In order to be clear and to-the-point, your message must be self contained in a “talking point.” As we have discussed, a successful media interaction will be focused, and direct, so you must limit the talking points to your absolute most important take-away messages.

In planning for interviews, we tend to urge people to distill their message down to 2-3 talking points. For longer media endeavors--such as a campaign, tour or ongoing media blitz--spokespeople can utilize up to 5 or 6 talking points. By limiting the number of talking points, we can ensure that every key message will be delivered with consistency.

Below are some key talking points for specific topics we often face as victim advocates. Consider which ones you might use and how you would combine them with talking points about your agency, community or specialization.

CALCASA MyStrength Campaign:

- The MyStrength campaign creates an opportunity for young men to stand up and speak out against sexual violence.
- The MyStrength campaign empowers young men to help prevent sexual violence.
- Rather than looking at young men as potential perpetrators, the MyStrength campaign focuses on the positive aspects of strength and masculinity.

Sex offender management:

- Community notification / Residency Restrictions / GPS tracking is only one part of a comprehensive sex offender management strategy.
- Sex offender management must be done in the context of bringing together a variety of service providers, which include victim advocates.
- When we bring together multi-disciplinary perspectives, we can be more effective at managing individual offenders.
- High-tech solutions are valuable as long as they open up dialogue and help educate community members.
- Community notification doesn't mean just telling people that there is a sex offender coming town.
- We want offenders to be successful and the measure of success is no more victims.
- We are also readily aware that the vast majority of sex offenses aren't committed by strangers but by people that the victim knows, loves and trusts.

Frequency of sexual assault:

- The frequency of sexual assault is striking, with a forcible rape occurring on average once every 5.6 minutes in the US and once every 56 minutes in California alone. That's why we are ... (Crime Clock, 2005)
- Statistically as much as 70 percent of sexual assaults are perpetrated by someone that the victim knows, loves, and trusts (CALCASA, 2007 Report on Rape and Violence). Therefore, we try to focus on ...

4.3 Using technology to reach the masses

A variety of online media and political advocacy tools are at your disposal, everything from web sites to social networking. On-line technology is especially well-suited for helping nonprofits reach the news media. You can save time and mailing costs by e-mailing your news releases and other materials to reporters and editors. For example, by making these materials available via your organization's web site, you provide 24-hour access to important information.

Online technology is especially well-suited for helping non-profits reach the news media.

It is important to remember that the Internet is a two-way street. It is a place to communicate your core messages to your constituency, not only with the media but to your constituency. Readers can comment on content, like news stories, blogs and on social networking sites. Be sure you check your resources and that all the facts are accurate.

Websites

Your agency website can be used as a focal point to distribute messages, information and the values of the organization. It is your public face and the first impression people may have of you.

Blogs

A blog is a type of website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. They are frequently updated and can be the product of one or more individuals. Blogging software is a convenient publishing tool and can be used as a diary, a community center, or a tool to promote a particular campaign, among a variety of other options.

Bloggers commonly discuss stories that appear in mainstream media or from another blog. Readers are able to contribute to the discussion by leaving comments. Blogs can also promote stories that are ignored in the mainstream media or keep a fading story in the public view.

For example, each year, CALCASA identifies legislation of interest that expands sexual assault victim rights, enhances survivor services, promotes prevention initiatives and holds sexual offenders accountable. CALCASA Public Policy.org offers a variety of legislative tools to our members and allies through our public policy blog, RSS feed and Grassroots Online Advocacy Center. The blog is a forum that allows readers to take part in supporting CALCASA legislation, contacting their elected officials or finding out more about their representatives.

Social Networking

Social networking sites can be a good way of reaching a new audience. Social networking websites allow people and organizations to set up a profile page with basic information about themselves or their organization and then link to other people's pages. Readers can browse profiles by conducting key word searches, clicking on links that direct them to other profiles and allow readers to leave comments.

Many corporations and advocacy organizations are using social networking sites to disseminate messages.

Many corporations and advocacy organizations are using social networking sites to disseminate messages. You can also use social networking profiles as a mass communication tool by sending a message to all of your friends at once. In addition, some social networking sites like MySpace, Facebook, Friendster and Linked In include a blogging function.

RSS

RSS (Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Syndication) is another great tool that enables you to keep readers up to date about your site content. RSS feeds send subscribers a brief blurb and a title about each new article or post on a web site or blog, with a link to that post. RSS is also a great tool to promote Podcasts, web sites, radio and more.

If you're a small or medium-sized nonprofit, chances are the media does not know what's happening with your organization. Aside from establishing relationships with reporters, keep the media informed through news releases, guest editorials, news media advisories, and events held specifically for the news media's benefit.

SECTION 5: Who is Your Audience

5.1 Why knowing your audience matters

There is no single approach to media advocacy on the issue of sexual violence. As advocates we know that different members of our community interact with this issue differently, and we therefore need to craft our message accordingly. For example, we don't discuss this issue with law enforcement in the same way we discuss it with students in a classroom. With that in mind, we have to define and refine our message to suit our audience.

Tap into your audience's existing concerns to help make the issue personal to them.

Your broader communications plan will seek to address everyone in your community in some way. But when it comes down to writing a press release, responding in an interview or even choosing certain broadcast channels for running a PSA, identifying the audience and framing your message accordingly will have a tremendous impact on the effectiveness of your message.

Identifying your audience

The audience you seek to reach will determine a number of factors, including: the media outlets you work with, the language you use, and the level of detail or areas of the issue that you discuss. For each of the sample stated publicity goals the organization is targeting at least one specific audience.

Points to remember when framing your story:

Framing your story for maximum impact and the widest reach will catch a reporters attentions. Some questions to consider when framing your story include:

- How many people will be affected?
- What is the controversy or conflict in terms of political or cultural policy?
- How wide is the reach of the story?

Talking about sexual violence is difficult, but the crime affects a wide range of people and can be framed in a way that makes readers feel they have a direct connection with the issue.

For example, sometimes you may want to educate judges and other times you may be raising awareness in a particular neighborhood. In a perfect world, the common public would be so passionate about this issue that they would thirst for the level of detail and precision that judges sometimes require. In our world, these two distinct groups have very different values, resources, engagement, knowledge about the issue of sexual violence and we should direct our message accordingly.

Media advocacy goals can best be served by communicating to different audiences. In some cases, the broad general public should be targeted. In other cases, the audience is much more specific. For your own organizations goals, write down the audiences you want to target.

Goal	Audience	Media Outlets
1)		
2)		
3)		
4)		
5)		

SECTION 6: When the News Media Call

Generating media about sexual violence is one of the most effective tools activists have for informing community members, politicians and policy makers. The media have the power to make this issue a top community priority. As advocates, we can educate and inspire reporters about the positive role they can play in ending sexual violence.

6.1 Tips on Talking to the Media

In Section 2 and 3, we talked about the importance of developing a strategic communications plan. With that in mind, let's discuss some key points to remember when talking to the media.

When talking to print based media or broadcast media, consider these tips:

- Speak naturally
- Avoid lengthy technical explanations
- Focus on your talking points
- Know the reporter, publication/program, interview format, audience
- Know the goal for the interview (what information will be gathered or shared)
- Gather any visual materials
- Write down any questions that may be asked and prepare answers
- Prepare for a multitude of questions to be asked
- Television is a visual media format and it is important to wear appropriate clothing

Prior to giving interviews, it is a good idea to practice. For instance, you can videotape yourself and then critique your public speaking skills or you can practice by giving mock interview with your staff. Once you start practicing, each interview will become easier over time and you will be able to state key messages in a variety of situations.

Basically, an interview is a presentation tailored to an issue and/or audience. It is also an excellent opportunity to tell/sell your story. An interview is NOT a debate, an intellectual discussion, a friendly chat, or an educational exchange.

Below are some interview guidelines that are helpful to follow:

Interview Guidelines: Crucial Steps

<p>1. Return a reporter's call immediately and gather key information from the reporter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your deadline? • What is the story about? • How do I fit into the story? • Who else have you talked to?
<p>2. Questions & tips to consider as you prepare for your interview.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is my message? • How can I prove/justify this message? • How might someone disagree with me? • How can I rebut this criticism? • Anticipate questions (particularly the tough ones). • Rehearse your answers. • Gather background facts and statistics for support.
<p>3. Stay on message during the interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge from reporter's question to your own talking point (e.g. "Yes, that seems to be happening, however what we are really trying to emphasize is..." or "Certainly that's an important piece of this conversation, but the thing that is most vital to our community is..."). • Use "flagging" emphasize important points (e.g. "the most important thing to remember is..." or "What everybody should be most concerned about is...")
<p>4. After the interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the reporter for his or her time and offer to be an ongoing resource on the issue or related stories. • Make sure to give the reporter a business card or brochure, and let them know about upcoming events or stories that may be of interest. • Be prepared for a reporter to call after the interview to double check quotes.
<p>4. Some final tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't wait for the right question • Never repeat negative language • Turn Negatives into Positives • Avoid jargon and acronyms • Don't speak "off-the-record" • Don't guess, speculate or lie

6.2 Interview Tips for Survivors

CALCASA's priority is to minimize the trauma for any individual, particularly a survivor or family member, who chooses to speak to the media. It is important to provide specific options for a survivor to consider, prior to any interview.

- Brief the survivor about the story and some of the questions the reporter may ask, before the interview begins
- Let the survivor know that she can decline to answer questions that make her feel uncomfortable
- Offer the survivor a support person during the interview
- Remember nothing is off the record
- The survivor does not have to give the reporter identifying information

Section 7: Toolbox

7.1 Press Release

A press release is intended to get journalists' interest and can be used to make an announcement or to provide a response to a current issue or recent story. For instance, your agency might have a new report you want to share with a large audience. Maybe you are hosting a gala or holding an event in your community. Perhaps your agency is talking about a recent policy decision in your community that is being discussed in the media.

Avoid saturating the media with news releases on anything and everything that your organization does. This dilutes the credibility of your organization and your chances of obtaining coverage when the really important issues arise.

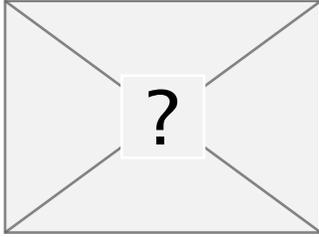
A press releases should read like a new story and provide the who, what, when, where, why and how of your event. Include the most salient information in the first two paragraphs. Keep the length of the release to no more than two pages and indicate the end of the release by placing “###” at end of the document.

See below for a sample news release.

Tips to consider:

- **Examine your intentions:** Why are you writing a release? What do you hope to accomplish? Is it newsworthy?
- **Avoid using jargon.** Make sure the words you use are easy to understand by most audiences.
- **Write your release for your audience.** Imagine how you want your news written about in the media and craft your release accordingly.
- **Be familiar with the media outlet and its audience.**

Sample Press Release



For more information, please contact:

Robert Coombs, Director of Public Affairs
California Coalition Against Sexual Assault
916-446-2520 X 325, 916-743-6069 (mobile)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SACRAMENTO, CA, Sept. 13, 2005 – Today, the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA) unveiled a cutting-edge multi-media and outreach campaign to prevent sexual violence in California that targets young men aged 14-18 and engages them as part of a solution to prevent first-time perpetration. Titled the “MyStrength Campaign,” the multi-million dollar initiative was presented at a press conference today at Sacramento High School’s Underground Books store.

Opening Paragraph
(should contain: who, what, when, where, why)”

Remainder of body text:

- Should include any relevant information to your services.
- Include benefits and why your service is unique.
- You could also include quotes from staff members and survivors.

As the largest campaign of its kind in the United States, The MyStrength campaign centers around the theme, “My Strength is Not for Hurting,” emphasizing healthy relationships and empowering young men to maintain their strength and masculinity without using coercion, intimidation, force or violence. As a complement to CALCASA’s more than 30 years of work and programs that urge young women to protect themselves from sexual assault, MyStrength takes a unique, non-traditional approach by encouraging men to play a vital role in creating a safe environment for their relationships and reinforces that men can put an end to sexual violence in California.

As a part of the campaign, CALCASA also introduced its Strength Team -- a primary vehicle for driving its mission. Consisting of three young men armed with the campaign’s messages and a passion for reaching their peers as part of the prevention effort, the Strength Team will travel throughout California in a campaign-branded Suzuki XL-7 SUV during September and October and meet with young men at local high schools and rape crisis centers to discuss how they can be involved.

If there is more than 1 page use:
-more-

Try to keep your press release to 1 page, but if you use 2 pages, use an abbreviated headline (page 2).

The MyStrength Campaign is based on an existing prevention program developed by Washington D.C.-based Men Can Stop Rape, and involves 66 rape crisis centers throughout California. The Campaign helps overcome barriers to sexual violence education by offering resources to underserved communities in California. Students, young men, educators and parents can access educational tools to increase their understanding and involvement in sexual violence prevention. Additional information on this campaign can be found on www.mystrength.org or www.mifuerza.org.

- Insert the remainder of the text on page 2
- Restate Contact information after your

For more information contact: Robert Coombs, Director of Public Affairs, 916-446-2520 X 325, 916-743-6069 (mobile)

###

(indicates Press
Release is

Press/News Release Template

(Your Letterhead)

(Date)

Contact: (Name)
(Organization)
(Phone number)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Headline

Opening Paragraph (should contain: who, what, when, where, why)”

Remainder of body text – Should include any relevant information to your services. Include benefits and why your service is unique. You could also include quotes from staff members and survivors.

If there is more than 1 page use:

-more-

(The top of the next page):

Abbreviated headline (page 2)

Remainder of text.

(Restate Contact information after your last paragraph):

###

(indicates Press Release is finished)

7.2 Media Advisory

The goal of an advisory is to get media to come to the event. Language should be enticing and in the future tense. There is a particular format to follow when writing advisories, to include details such as who, what, where, when and why the activity is occurring. Media Advisory's are an excellent example of proactive media and can be used to tell a story and generate media interest in an event.

Media advisories and alerts are used to notify the press of a news event.

Media advisories should be sent via fax or e-mail in advance of our event. Remember that weekly newspapers need more time than daily papers. Radio and TV generally need two days notice. After you fax or email the advisory, make a follow-up phone call to make sure they have received the information and answer any questions they may have. Always call the media the morning of an event to remind them of the time and location.

Below is an example of a media advisory as well as a template your organization can use.

****MEDIA ADVISORY – SEPTEMBER 13****

CALIFORNIA LAUNCHES CUTTING-EDGE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN THAT ENGAGES YOUNG MEN TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Media advisories should only provide the **who, what, when, and why of an event**, directions to the event, interview opportunities, or visuals for television

Who: California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA) executives and state officials unveil the “MyStrength” Campaign – an innovative initiative focused on preventing sexual violence.

What: As the largest effort of its kind in the United States, CALCASA’s MyStrength Campaign includes a multi-media statewide advertising, marketing and outreach campaign that involves 66 rape treatment centers throughout California. Different than traditional prevention initiatives, the campaign targets young men aged 14-18 and empowers them to stand up and speak out against sexual violence.

When/Where Tuesday, September 13, 10 am - noon
Sacramento High School’s Underground Books Store
(off-campus)
2814 35th Street (Cross Street: Broadway)
Sacramento 95817

Interview Opps

- Interviews with CALCASA executives
- Interviews with California Department of Health Services representative

Visuals:

- Interviews with the “Strength Team,” a group of young men who will travel throughout California to engage students in the program
- Visual: Group of Sacramento High Students united for this cause
- Visual: advertising campaign, MyStrength Web site designs and Strength Team’s campaign-branded SUV

To Attend and Receive More Information, Contact:

Jennifer Jones
PainePR (care of CALCASA)
213-996-3766 (work), 310-918-4313 (mobile)
jjones@painepr.com

###

Include the contact information at the end of the advisory, followed by ### to indicate the advisory is finished.

Media Advisory Template

****MEDIA ADVISORY – INSERT DATE****

INSERT TITLE

Insert a short description of the advisory

Who: Can include information about who the event is targeted toward, the event's goal, parking information, or anything else that the audience needs to know about the event.

Proofread, proofread, proofread! And, plan early. Most media require 3-4 weeks lead time to list your event, or cover it with a reporter.

What: An appropriate format for requesting a calendar listing. A short, factual description of the public event (e.g., 'out of town' speaker(s), controversial topic, or just the name and nature of the public gathering).

When/Where Day of Week, Full Date, from When (AM/PM) to When (AM/PM), Name of Building (Street Address, Room Number)

**Interview Opportunities/
Visuals** Provide information on who the media can interview, visual or any.....

To Attend and Receive More Information, Contact:

Insert name of staff contact

Phone number(s)

Email address

#

7.3 News Conference

A news conference is a structured event, with the intent of creating an opportunity to release news simultaneously to all media. News conferences are helpful if you have a visual story to tell.

Alert the media by sending out a media advisory.

News conferences are used to make major announcements or in crisis situations are used to answer multiple press inquiries at one time. These events can sometimes be difficult to control, despite advance news releases, media strategy sessions, and pitching efforts. Moreover, news conferences may not draw the attention of reporters unless there is a breaking news story.

When scheduling a news conference, consider the date and time. A date that does not conflict with another event or special occasion is crucial for obtaining coverage. Examples of events include special observances, holidays, local government announcements, and anniversaries of monumental events. Monitor the news to remain informed about local events that may capture media attention before determining a date.

In addition to selecting a date that avoids competition with other events, choose a time and day that are convenient for reporters. Usually mornings after 10:00 a.m. or early afternoons work well for reporters. Avoid scheduled broadcast times like noon and 5 p.m.

Below are tips to consider when planning a news conference:

- Check your expectations—ask yourself and your team about what you want to achieve with a news conference. Could this information be shared with media in a different way?
- Decide on the location—consider the best place to announce your news. Aim for interesting and relevant locations to launch your news.
- Answer the question: What will the media take away from this briefing? Make sure you know what you want to communicate and that there's a call to action that journalists understand.
- Prepare, prepare, prepare.
- Use a media advisory to invite and remind people to attend your news conference. Don't just send an advisory and hope for the best. Follow up with phone calls.
- Entice your attendees with food.
- Follow up.

7.4 Writing an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor

So you want to write an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor? What is the difference between these two types of opinion pieces?

- An *op-ed* is a longer piece that addresses a current issue.
- A *letter to the editor* is a short reaction to a recent op-ed or article.

Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed): An opinion editorial, commonly referred to as an Op-Ed, are in-depth opinion pieces commonly submitted to newspapers. Op-Eds are an excellent means of raising public awareness about sexual violence.

There are many opportunities for the RCCs to place articles in local papers, especially when timed with local events during Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

If submitting an Op-Ed paper, it should be written in a news article format but in an opinionated fashion, outlining your organization's persuasive points and solutions to issues, and citing necessary statistics and facts as back-up to your opinions and/or arguments.

Letters to the editor: Letters to the editor are generally written by individuals expressing a point of view on current issues. In the letter, it is important to note aspects of the story you feel were underplayed, correct factual items that were in error, or present a point of view you feel was misrepresented. Letters should be no more than 250 words and relevant to current stories or editorials that have been covered in a newspaper.

Instructions to submit a letter to the editor should be available in the newspaper. It is preferable to use e-mail to submit a letter if an electronic address is provided.

OpEd Writing Tips:

- Make it timely
- Keep it brief
- Stick to a single point
- Remember your audience

Sample Letter to the Editor / Op-Ed

How do you end rape? Let social service agencies, law enforcement offices, and the courts take care of the problem? Congratulate them when they get a notorious, serial rapist off the street? Or when they counsel another survivor?

Comment or refute the opinion or point of view presented in the article or event.

Maybe you alone are not capable of stopping someone else from using sex to overpower or control another person. But think about typical human response to sexual assault: the idea that the rape victim asked for it because s/he was in the wrong place at the wrong time; a friend or family member decides to protect a perpetrator from legal consequence rather than the child who discloses s/he was sexually abused by him/her; a witness of sexual harassment plays along and fails to support the person who is harassed.

These attitudes and behaviors turn into excuses for the potential sex offender. So rather than counter sexual violence, they actually perpetrate it. Unfortunately our society is accustomed to accepting these responses to rape and sexual assault – rather than holding perpetrators responsible.

Provide your solution. Site specific things that your organization is doing to solve the problem.

The reality is that rape and sexual assault are crimes – deliberate acts in which the perpetrator uses sex to overpower and control. It does not matter what a rape victim wears, whether or not s/he was drinking, if s/he was physically disabled or otherwise hindered from protecting her/himself. It does not matter if a rape victim was flirting with the attacker prior to the assault. Rape is a crime. Those who commit criminal acts deserve punishment.

Conclude your point and include organization contact formation.

We must each stop pretending that it is the rape victim or survivor who must learn about self-protection and avoiding the rapist. We must examine our own attitudes and actions that contribute to a culture that accepts and condones rape. Report rape, talk to your friend and colleagues. Learn more from websites, books and most importantly seek help if you are in need.

Sincerely,

Name
Title, Organization

Letter to the Editor / OpEd Template

(Your Letterhead)

(Date)

(Editor's Name)
(Publication)

Dear (insert editor's name)

Paragraph 1

Reference the article or event that you are commenting on.

Paragraph 2

Comment or refute the opinion or point of view presented in the article or event.

Paragraph 3

Provide your solution. Site specific things that your organization is doing to solve the problem.

Paragraph 4

Conclude. Include organization contact formation.

Sincerely,

Name
Title, Organization

APPENDIX A:

DEFINING MEDIA TERMS

Advertising

Advertising, often referred to as "paid media," is the controlled use of print or broadcast media in the hopes that your message will reach the exact audience you want, in the format you want and at the time you want.

Blogs

A blog (or a web log) is a website where writers provide commentary on a variety of topics from politics to local news. It can also serve as a daily or weekly diary. Most blogs contain text, images and links to other blogs or web sites.

Calendar Release

A calendar release is a modified news release designed to provide community calendar editors (TV, radio and print) basic information about an event.

Commercial

A paid-for announcement or advertisement. A radio or television sales message.

Editorial (Op-Ed)

An editorial is a reaction to another recent editorial, event or news story, to make a point, state a fact, or offer an opinion. An opinion editorial is generally called an op-ed because it refers to the page or pages opposite the editorial page. It is an area set aside for articles that provide an in-depth and often personal perspective on issues considered to be of current importance.

Electronic news/RSS

RSS (Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Syndication) is an easy way to keep your readers abreast of updates to your site content. At their simplest and most common, RSS feeds send subscribers the title and a brief blurb about each new article or post on a given site or blog, along with a link to the post. Users can subscribe directly to feeds from sites they read regularly, though feed aggregators such as Feedster and MyYahoo also collect feeds in searchable form.

Letter to the Editor

An opinion of a notable public figure is often expressed in a "letter to the editor," or guest opinion piece.

Hard News

"Hard news" is usually information that is previously unknown, a noteworthy event, a controversy, the release of a study, etc.

Social Networking Sites

Using social networking sites is an excellent tool to reach a new audience and potential supporters. Social networking sites are similar to a web page.

Organizations and individuals set up their own profile page, with basic information, and then link to other pages. Using social networking sites is a way to promote specific campaigns or provide more information about a range of issues.

Soft News

“Soft news” stories typically focus on individuals, organizations or families involved in something that may be of interest to the community.

Media Advisory/Media Alert

An advisory or alert is a brief, one-page, typed notice intended to notify the media of an upcoming "hard" news event, like a news conference.

News Release

A news release offers more information than an advisory, and usually goes out to more media vehicles. A release may precede a news event you want covered, make an announcement or provide a response or explanation on a current issue or recent story.

News Conference

A news conference is a structured event, with the intent of creating an opportunity to release news simultaneously to all media. A news conference is also used when there is a visual story to tell.

Public Service Announcement (PSA)

A public service announcement (or PSA) is essentially a radio or television spot that provides an important message to its target audience. The space/time given to the spot is free of charge, so this media tool is reserved strictly for organizations that qualify as non-profit under federal tax laws. Spot Broadcast messages are often referred to as "spots." They can be either paid-for advertising or PSAs.

Talkshow - Radio and Television

A talkshow provides a structured format in which guests can present issues and concerns of interest to the community.

Follow-up

Following up with media is the key to any successful media relations plan. Not only is it important to distribute materials, but follow-up calls are the tool allowing you to make personal contact and set your news release or advisory apart from the volumes of releases that come in each day. You can develop interest and keep an issue alive by making calls and writing letters to respond to columnists and reporters.

Hook

A media hook is the key idea, event, or individual that will capture the attention of the media when pitching. The hook may be conveyed through written material, such as the headline of a news release, or in conversation during a follow up call.

Message

The message of the concept being conveyed.

Sound Byte

The media creates sound bytes from messages that are presented to them. Sound bytes are tailored to fit media time constraints. Sound bytes should be “catchy.”

Resources

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