



Media Requests for Victim and Co-Victim Interviews

Media Relations | Media Requests for Interviews

*click the video link for practical tips from law enforcement agency personnel



Purpose and Common Uses

Media representatives often seek interviews with victims and co-victims to bolster public knowledge about specific criminal events or broader issues that illustrate the intersections of system responses with crime, trauma, and community interests. These interviews often lead to information being available in print, broadcast, and internet avenues. Some victims and co-victims prefer to have no contact with media representatives, while others view media interviews as helpful options toward case resolution and personal healing. When interviewing victims and co-victims, media representatives should prioritize factual representations that align with their expressed goals and interests.



Media Relations Tip Sheet

Victims' Rights Connections

Although victims' rights in each state and the federal system are unique, they often include the rights for victims and co-victims to treatment with fairness and dignity, privacy around access to personal information, notice of and be present at justice system events, confer with system professionals, express views and accompaniment of support persons at key system intersections, reasonable protection from the accused, and information about processes and services. When facilitating media requests for interviews, agency personnel should adjust practices whenever possible to ensure proactive and consistent access to these rights for victims and co-victims.



Victimization Considerations

Nuanced factors surrounding the dynamics of household property crimes, nonfatal personal crimes, death investigations, and unsolved homicide and sexual assault cases can influence the participation of victims and co-victims in media interviews. Timing of interview requests is often important to consider, particularly the intersections around when criminal events occurred, existing and new obligations of those impacted by crimes (e.g., work, school, care providing roles), and key dates (e.g., anniversaries of crimes, court dates). Media representatives are encouraged to transparently discuss the focus of interviews with victims and co-victims to afford them opportunities to review alignments with their personal desires.



Victim Services Role

Victim services personnel can provide vital assistance around media requests for interviews. They can help victims and co-victims explore specific concerns, desired outcomes, and possible effects on investigations and prosecutions. Victims and co-victims can also benefit from accompaniment during interviews to ensure requested interview conditions are met and questions are answered. Victim services personnel can collaborate with media representatives around careful consideration of language and images used to support sensitive interview approaches. Media representatives can also benefit from help with understanding victimization dynamics and addressing language access and other participation needs.