



Introduction

Media relations toolkit

Engaging the media to elevate sexual violence prevention

Coverage in local, regional, and national media is important — news coverage across formats keeps communities and leaders up to date on key issues and informs public understanding. When sexual violence prevention practitioners engage the media, it is an opportunity to elevate sexual violence prevention, connect with new audiences, and increase your organization’s credibility and recognition.

In recent years, high-profile cases of sexual harassment, abuse, and assault have been increasingly covered by the media, providing an opportunity to broaden how the public understands sexual violence and opportunities for prevention. Since the complex topic of sexual violence can be difficult for journalists to cover, and even more difficult for the public to understand, the expertise of prevention practitioners is more valuable than ever.

Prevention practitioners can partner with media to provide accurate information and connect specific events to the broader issue and impact of sexual violence and what can be done to prevent it. By working with the media, prevention practitioners can provide timely, pertinent information to reporters and become trusted sources they depend on for story ideas and background when news breaks. The media relations tools included here are intended to support your efforts to build relationships with journalists and inform news coverage about sexual harassment, abuse, and assault.

Engaging the media: Media relations tools

- Preparing for an interview
- Writing a press release to create news
- Crafting a media advisory to engage journalists
- Contributing to news coverage
- Planning media relations throughout the year
- Reusing the news



It's not enough for sexual violence to make it into mainstream news. It's also important that stories convey that sexual harassment, abuse, and assault are not inevitable, since news coverage contributes to how the issue is perceived and talked about by the public. For additional guidance on how to reframe, develop messages, and effectively communicate about preventing sexual violence, please see *Moving toward prevention: A guide for reframing sexual violence*.¹

Whether you are responding directly to requests for comment or proactively reaching out to journalists, understanding news values and practices is key to success. Journalists are experienced in gathering information and perspectives to bring to their stories. Prevention practitioners can support this process by sharing easy-to-use resources that include relevant definitions, statistics, and information. The following resources are tools prevention practitioners can share with journalists covering sexual violence to inform their coverage and build their skills for reporting on this topic.

Additional resources for working with journalists:

Reporting on sexual violence

- This media guide includes definitions and key terms, statistics, language considerations, and resources to aid in reporting about sexual violence. vetoviolenace.cdc.gov/sites/all/themes/veto_bootstrap/assets/sv-landing/SV_Media_Guide_508c.pdf

NSVRC media packet

- The eight resources included in this packet answer common questions related to sexual violence. www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications-information-packets/media-packet

NSVRC tip sheet for journalists

- This resource includes best practices and story ideas for writing about sexual violence. www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications/reporting-sexual-violence-tips-journalists

Issue 22: What's missing from the news on sexual violence? An analysis of coverage, 2011-2013

- This publication by the Berkeley Media Studies Group presents findings on news coverage of sexual violence to illustrate how the topic is covered and identify any gaps. www.bmsg.org/resources/publications/issue-22-sexual-violence-news-analysis-2011-2013

Reporting on sexual violence

- This online course created by the Poynter Institute and NSVRC addresses language use, stereotypes about perpetrators, and how to avoid predictable coverage. www.newsu.org/courses/reporting-sexual-violence

References

1. Berkeley Media Studies Group, & National Sexual Violence Resource Center. (2018). *Moving toward prevention: A guide for reframing sexual violence*. Retrieved from <https://www.nsvrc.org/moving-toward-prevention-guide-reframing-sexual-violence>

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