



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

www.kasap.org
24-Hour Hotline
1-800-656-HOPE

The media is a critical partner in our efforts to prevent sexual assault by promoting awareness. Media attention not only raises awareness and educates, it helps influence decision makers, funders, and potential supporters. Some of the many ways to approach the media include:

- Distribute media advisory (a very brief announcement of upcoming events and invitation to event for media) one week before event
- Distribute press release (a one page “story” about the events) on the day of the event. Many print media outlets will print this as is. Include a contact person at your agency.
- Sponsoring a public forum or press conference
- Submitting a letter-to-the-editor
- Meeting with editorial boards
- Speaking directly with reporters who cover sexual assault, community, crime or special features issues
- Working with your local newspaper on a Sexual Assault Awareness Month insert
- Informing newsletters and periodicals
- Appearing on public affairs television or radio programs
- Hosting interviews during sports breaks
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs), radio PSAs are available from KASAP

REMEMBER:

- Media contacts are not on your schedule. To work effectively with the media, be available to compromise on scheduling and always be prepared to make a statement when contacted.
- Find news items or events in your community and provide your expertise to the media. Let them know who the experts are in your area.
- Remember that news happens that may supersede your story, keep in touch with the media and see if your story could be aired later.
- Watch what you say. Be prepared for any type of question. Know your stuff! Practice with a co-worker or a friend so that you can be prepared for anything. The media is often looking for a good story and you want to provide them with the facts, so know them before speaking to the media.





STRATEGY FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

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DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH AND THE ENTIRE YEAR

1. Set goals and objectives for your media efforts.

The first step in planning a media strategy is to identify your goals and objectives. Your goal may be as general as educating the public about the importance of preventing sexual assault. Your objectives should be more specific and state what you want to accomplish and when you want it done; this gives you a means to measure your progress.

2. Define your target audience.

Decide who it is you really want to reach — state or local “opinion” leaders, policy makers, or the general public. This will help you determine which news format will work best for your message.

3. Select the Best Approach.

- Letters-to-the-editor. To express your position in your own words or respond to an article or editorial, write a letter to the editor.
- Press/News releases. By distributing press releases at meetings or events, your organization can improve public awareness of your efforts and reinforce the message that you are sending to policy makers. Reporters may use information from your press releases to supplement stories they are already writing or may be inspired to write stories based on the content of the releases. See page 24 for a sample press release.
- Holding a press conference. A press conference gives you the opportunity to announce your efforts as an organization and to explain your public awareness effort.
- Radio/TV public affairs programs. Radio and TV public affairs programs are always looking for programming ideas. These programs guarantee that you will reach a broad audience.
- Public Service Announcements. (PSAs) can be effective as well. Radio PSAs are available from KASAP.





PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS WITH THE MEDIA

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DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE

Before you or a designated spokesperson talks to the media, decide on your message with two or three points that you most want to make. Write them up as "talking points." Each should be clear and brief, no more than two complete sentences.

Make your message compelling, use colorful words as much as possible. People respond better to familiar, tangible things, so use analogies and contemporary references. Tangible numbers speak volumes, e.g., say "one in four," rather than citing a huge number.

PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

- Choose a location in advance so that you're comfortable.
- Be prepared.
- Find out in advance what the focus and slant of the interview will be about. Ask how the interviewer was briefed and send her or him any relevant information. Agree to possible questions in advance.
- Find out who will interview you and who else they will be interviewing or have interviewed. If you are going to be on a radio or television show, ask about the interview style of the host.
- Know if the program takes calls from listeners and if so, determine acceptable questions in advance. If unacceptable questions are missed by the screener, simply turn the questions around by saying "*I can tell you this ...*" and state a fact or a way an individual can get involved without answering the question.

ANTICIPATE THE QUESTIONS

There are two kinds of questions you should devise answers to before you do an interview.

1. The questions you are most likely to be asked
2. The questions you are most afraid to be asked

TAKE CONTROL OF THE INTERVIEW

You have primary responsibility for the interview, not the reporter. Look at each question as an opportunity to deliver your message. If you are asked an offensive/stupid question or a question you don't want to answer, sidestep the question and turn the question around.

Some ideas to turn questions around:

"No, that is not really accurate, Dan, but I can tell you that ..."

"I think what you are really getting at here is ..."

TIPS FOR LOOKING GOOD ON-CAMERA

- Throughout the interview, sit up straight and pay attention to your posture.
- Use hand gestures for animation but contain them so that they don't go off screen. Remember, the camera is focused on just your face and neck most of the time.
- If you wear glasses, keep them on while you are on camera to avoid squinting.
- At a minimum, wear lipstick color that is slightly darker than your natural lip color, so that your face doesn't look monochrome. Some stations have experts who will do your make-up; ask in advance.
- Wear neat clothes with simple tailoring, like a blouse and jacket, or a dress.
- Wear solid colors avoiding plaids, stripes or patterns; and fabrics that sparkle or have a high sheen. Avoid colors that blend with your skin tone.
- Avoid large earrings, bracelets, or necklaces that may distract or clang.





PREPARING A SURVIVOR FOR AN INTERVIEW

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It is the nature of the media to want to talk to someone directly affected by the issues on which they are reporting. You probably have been, and will be again, asked to identify a survivor of sexual violence who will agree to do an interview.

While it is important to respond to these media requests, it is even more important to ensure that survivors are not placed in positions that could endanger their emotional or physical well-being. Use caution in determining if and/or when survivors should be interviewed. Before considering whether or not to provide the names of survivors to talk with the media, consult the policy of your agency on such matters. If no policy exists, consider putting one in place. If you ask a survivor, be sure that s/he understands that s/he can refuse the interview. Discuss the possibility that the interview could trigger a crisis.

Prior to the interview:

- Find out in advance if the survivor wants identity concealed and tell both the reporter and producer in advance so that no mistakes occur.
- Offer to accompany survivor and have a counselor on hand as the interview may trigger trauma and embarrassment. Inform survivor of these potential impacts.
- Inform reporter and producer of potential impact on survivor and have a plan to terminate the interview midstream if need be.
- Let the survivor know s/he has the right to NOT answer any questions s/he does not feel comfortable answering.
- Discuss and limit conversation topics in advance to ensure survivor's comfort -the survivor should not feel pressured to "have to" answer anything.
- Practice the interview through "mock" interview role play.

Find out essential information before an interview is scheduled, such as:

- Topic
- Length of the interview
- Who will be the reporter
- Who else the station will have spoken to
- Who else will be interviewed (particularly if the format is a panel or talk show)

Review some of the questions the survivor is likely to be asked in the interview and practice answering potential questions. Let her/him know that s/he does not have to answer any questions that make her uncomfortable and talk about ways to address those questions.

Media Tips for Survivors - *You Have The Right To:*

- Say NO to being interviewed
 - Set conditions in advance for any interview: time, location, questions, and/or specific reporter
 - Know the angle of the story prior to agreeing to the interview
 - Refuse to do more than one interview
 - Review the interview and request edit rights before the interview airs
 - Seek correction for inaccurate information that was broadcast
- Remember, refrain from speaking "off-the-record," as there is no guarantee that these statements will not be made public.



SAMPLE LETTER TO THE MEDIA ANNOUNCING SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

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DATE

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

Dear (name):

March 2007 is Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Kentucky. The highlight of this month's activities in (city) will be a (event) on (date).

(Name of organization) will be using this occasion to raise public awareness about the nature and consequences of rape and other forms of sexual violence. We seek your help in bringing this important topic to the attention of the community through news stories, editorials, and interviews.

Here are some possible approaches to reporting on the problem of sexual assault:

- Services available for victims in our area
- How we can all take a role in prevention
- Causes of sexual violence in our society
- The anti-sexual violence movement in our area

Your assistance in communicating this message to your audience is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at (telephone number) or e-mail (e-mail address).

Sincerely,

Signature

Name of contact
Name of organization
Phone number
E-mail address

REMEMBER...

It is important to include a definite contact person with telephone numbers and e-mail address in this letter. Following up with a phone call is also important to keep your letter fresh in their memory.



PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE

CONTACT: Eileen Recktenwald
502-226-2704

MARCH 2007 IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Rape IS a Problem ... A Problem We CAN Talk About

March 2007 is Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Kentucky, a time designated by Governor Ernie Fletcher to focus on the staggering problem of sexual violence. During March, we would like your help to raise the awareness of sexual violence in the Commonwealth. Kentucky has a staggeringly high rate of sexual violence that needs to be brought into the public focus. Until the problem is openly discussed, it will never go away. Therefore, the theme for March 2007 is "**Believe Me. Rape IS a problem ... a problem we CAN talk about.**"

If you think you aren't affected by sexual violence in Kentucky, you're wrong. According to a landmark study released in 2003, one (1) out of every nine (9) adult women in Kentucky has been the victim of forcible rape sometime in her life.¹ This figure does not include include alcohol or drug facilitated rapes, attempted rapes, statutory rapes, rapes against women under age 18, boys, or men – all of whom are frequent victims. But this figure does include women who are just like your wife, mother, sister, daughter or girlfriend. Sexual violence happens to those of all income levels, races, and neighborhoods. It happens at all times of the day and night. And because less than 40% of all rapes are ever reported to police², the numbers may actually be much higher.

KASAP's Executive Director, Eileen Recktenwald, says "Sexual violence is just not a nice topic and people generally don't discuss it. Unfortunately, we can't make it go away by ignoring it. March is designated Sexual Assault Awareness Month to provide opportunities for everyone to learn more about sexual violence and how we can and must take action to stop it."

Though rape is an enormous problem, it is "a problem we CAN talk about." Remember that Sexual Assault Awareness Month provides an excellent opportunity for discussing a variety of issues related to sexual violence, including how to prevent it.

For information about activities, events, or information about sexual violence or services available to victims, contact KASAP at 502-226-2704, toll-free at 866-375-2727 or the 24-hour National Sexual Violence Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673).

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¹ Kilpatrick, Dean, & Ruggiero, Kenneth, *Rape in Kentucky: A Report to the Commonwealth*. National Violence Against Women Prevent Research Center; 2003.

² Rennison, US DOJ, *Rape & Sexual Assault: Reporting to Police & Medical Attention, 1992-2000* (2002), www.usdoj.gov.

