

Victims' Rights & the Media

Victims Should Have the Right:

- To say "no" to an interview;
- To select the spokesperson or advocate of the victim's choice;
- To select the time and location for media interviews;
- To request a specific reporter;
- To refuse an interview with a specific reporter even though he or she has granted interviews to other reporters;
- To say "no" to an interview even though the victim has previously granted interviews;
- To release a written statement through a spokesperson in lieu of an interview;
- To exclude children from interviews;
- To refrain from answering any questions with which the victim is uncomfortable or that the victim feels are inappropriate;
- To avoid a press conference atmosphere and speak to only one reporter at a time;
- To demand a correction when inaccurate information is reported;
- To ask that offensive photographs or visuals be omitted from airing or publication;
- To conduct a television interview using a silhouette or a newspaper interview without having their picture taken;
- To completely give the victim's side of the story related to the victimization;
- To refrain from answering reporters questions during a trial;
- To file a formal complaint against a reporter;
- To grieve in private; *and*
- To suggest training about media and victims for print and electronic media in their community.

A victim has the right at all times to be treated with dignity and respect by the media. Victims' rights to privacy can be better protected by the active participation of a victim advocate. A victim advocate can play an effective role as a "go-between" for the reporter and the victim establishing an environment conducive for the victim to speak to the press. This minimizes the invasion of privacy felt by the victim, allows advocates to advise victims about their rights in the media, and gives the media access to the story. Additionally, such a process assists those victims who wish to refuse to grant an interview. It also provides an opportunity for the advocate to assist the victim in preparing a statement, including reviewing the facts that can and cannot be released to the public, calming their fears, and being present when the actual interview is conducted.