

Serving Victims Building Trust Restoring Hope

SECTION 4 | COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGE MEDIA TIPS & TOOLS

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRRW) is an opportunity to highlight challenges faced by crime victims and emphasize the ongoing struggle to establish victims' rights. This year's theme—*Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope.*—underscores the importance of early intervention and victim services in establishing trust with victims, which in turn begins to restore their hopes for healing and recovery. Meeting victims where they are takes resources, dedication, and persistence to establish a welcoming, compassionate, and supportive environment for all victims to share their stories. Creating a comprehensive public awareness campaign for your NCVRRW outreach allows you to engage your members, local organizations, and the public in the important work of providing crime victims in our community with the support they need to recover on their terms.

The Social Media Landscape

Traditionally, outreach to the public and policy makers meant getting mainstream coverage from newspapers, television news, and local radio. Building relationships with the individual journalists and producers who cover crime stories for these outlets in your media market remains a critical method of educating the public, communicating with policy makers, and influencing coverage of the issues. Increasingly, however, to capture public attention, it is necessary to develop a social media strategy. Social media is often the cheapest, fastest, and most effective way to reach a wide audience. It is a powerful tool. In addition to alerting traditional journalists to important stories, it is a way to engage with the public and build relationships with succinct messaging that is unfiltered by mainstream media.

Engaging with the Media

Most reporters and producers are searching for current events or “news hooks” for their stories—even if they are planning coverage ahead of time. National Crime Victims' Rights Week is a perfect opportunity to focus the media's attention on crime issues relevant to your local community.

A little basic research goes a long way. Use search engines to look up local crime victim stories, and note which reporters cover these stories in your area and their contact information. Reporters change their subject focus and outlets often, so make sure you check with the relevant news desk or outlet website for the appropriate contact.

Most reporters include their e-mail address or Twitter handle at the end of their stories. If a particular reporter or news outlet does a good piece on crime victims, send the link around via e-mail or share it on Facebook and Twitter. This way you are both informing people and promoting the work of a reporter or outlet that may be interested in future stories.

If your agency is holding a newsworthy event, either for National Crime Victims' Rights Week or any time during the year, send out invitations and alerts via social media, and contact your local reporters by phone and e-mail. Briefly describe the event and offer yourself as a resource. Reporters are on tight deadlines, so anything you can give them ahead of time is useful. For news stories you may only have a few hours to turn around a comment or other information; investigative or feature pieces may afford more time. Reporters will often ask for a local or human-interest angle. Be prepared for the following types of questions

when pitching: Has a local victim triumphed over tragedy or found a way to help other victims restore their lives? Is there a victim who would be willing to share his or her story? Do you have a reliable source for up-to-date statistics on a particular kind of crime? Position your organization as a resource and refer to the newly designed “Crime and Victimization Fact Sheets” in Section 6 for data points. Have there been any other recent examples of the crime you are discussing in your area or in other communities around the country? Who could brief the reporter on the current status of the law in this area? Can your organization’s director provide an on-the-record comment?

Sample News Release

Use the sample news release in this section as a guide to help write your own NCVRW release or to provide a model for colleagues to publicize your local events. The news release announces National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, explores the theme, quotes the director of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime, and encourages your local audience to contact your organization. Be sure to share your releases and media advisories with colleagues, partners, and other professionals who share your mission or have partnered with you to plan NCVRW events.

Send out your NCVRW release well in advance of your events to reporters and partner organizations. Be sure to post the release on your Facebook page and tweet about it. Use a 10-day lead time to follow up with reporters and partner organizations, find spokespeople, answer questions, and create media kits for important events. Media kits should include the organization’s contact information, names, and e-mails for leadership or spokespeople, the mission statement or description of the organization’s work, and information about your NCVRW activities.

Sample Letter to the Editor

Readers’ letters and comments are often the most read sections of newspapers and news websites. They are great tools for building awareness about National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. Use the sample letter in this section for inspiration. Newspapers generally publish letters that respond to either previous or current articles or discuss news events in the community. Ideally you would cite a reliable recent study, quote statistics about the crime or issue, or stress the need for more research about crimes that are often hidden or underreported. Letters that are endorsed by multiple community groups will receive more attention. Consider asking local law enforcement officers or other organizations to partner with you or write their own letters for National Crime Victims’ Rights Week to highlight the needs of crime victims and how the public can help.

Sample Op-Ed Column

Newspaper editorial pages—both on paper and online—are highly popular among readers. Opinion-editorials are typically longer than letters to the editor and afford the opportunity to delve deeper into the issues. They are persuasive pieces. Research local crime coverage. Which crimes are of particular concern to your community, and how have they affected victims’ lives? Do statute-of-limitation laws need to be reformed? How is trust built between communities and law enforcement? Is there a rape kit backlog that needs to be addressed? Choose your topic, and scan for coverage in your newspaper or local news websites. Note the length and other guidelines for submitting an opinion-editorial. You might also contact someone you know at the newspaper, explain the importance of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, and ask how to maximize the chances of having your op-ed published. The sample included in this section can be used as a model.

Sample Public Service Announcements

Many media outlets offer free airtime for public service announcements (PSAs) to publicize events of interest to the community. Radio stations, in particular, may have significant amounts of time to fill and may be receptive to airing your NCVRW PSA. This section includes three sample scripts—for a 15-second, 30-second, and 60-second PSA. Create your own PSA or work with your local stations to produce an announcement about National Crime Victims' Rights Week and your organization's contributions to the community. Be sure to include relevant contact information as well as the organization's name, phone number, and website in your public service announcement. To increase the likelihood that local media will air your PSA, contact them well in advance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Talk to the producer, explain why the week is so important, and mention that you have already prepared PSAs about the week. When you send your script or PSA to your local reporters or television stations, include a cover letter with your contact information and the reasons why National Crime Victims' Rights Week is important to your community. Follow-up is critical for successful placement of PSAs.

How to Create a Social Media Campaign

Social media is increasingly important in all industries. Some audiences are difficult to reach through traditional channels and are turning to social media and online tools as their primary means of communication and acquiring information. The Pew Research Center reports that a substantial percentage of teens are online "almost constantly" and 82 percent of adults ages 18-29 use Facebook. Social media will help you expand and reinforce your message by expanding your reach to larger, more diverse audiences including populations such as young people that are underserved by traditional media. In addition to tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube, new tools like Vine and Snapchat can help you expand your message even further. It is also

a fantastic way to engage with supporters and constituents. Reporters and the general public often head online to look for information and resources, and it's worth investing some time in learning how to effectively communicate this way. Whatever your organization's goals—building public awareness, reaching victims, attracting donors, or gaining members—social media can supplement your traditional media outreach and help you achieve your objectives. This section includes some of the basics to help you get started and guide your use of these highly effective tools.

Sample Social Media Status Updates

This section includes sample status updates that you can post on Facebook and Twitter during National Crime Victims' Rights Week and during the entire month of April. Each update is a brief piece of information related to victimization, crime, National Crime Victims' Rights Week, or this year's theme: *Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope*. Only Facebook and Twitter samples are included; however, these can be adapted for numerous other social networks. All Twitter updates are limited to 140 characters, so you won't need to edit them before posting. These will get you started, but social media is best done dynamically by joining ongoing conversations, so you'll want to supplement these with status updates about what you are doing for National Crime Victims' Rights Week, or with information about local NCVRW events. Make sure to respond to and retweet information from your followers and follow the [#NCVRW2016](#) hashtag to see what others are talking about. Combining these updates with news about your own events and observations will expand the conversation and keep the community engaged in our discussion about victims' rights!

Other Outreach Tips

- Plan a comprehensive strategy that includes traditional media, social media, statements and letters by public

officials, and a series of key messages you want your audiences to receive.

- Contact editors, producers, or station managers by phone, e-mail, or mail *at least a month in advance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week* (two months for PSAs). Follow up *two weeks prior* as well.
- Ask local officials to issue NCVRW proclamations, write letters to the editor and opinion editorials (op-eds), speak at your events, and mention National Crime Victims' Rights Week as they conduct their official duties. Thank them for their contributions, tweet and post Facebook updates, and include their participation in your news releases and outreach materials. Retweet, share, and promote any good articles or segments about crime or victims' rights on social media.
- After your NCVRW events, send high-quality video, high-resolution photos, or digital images to your local television stations or newspapers with your contact information. Alert them in advance that photos or video are being sent.

Advocating for Victims with the Media

Communicating your message requires working effectively with reporters, while also advocating for and being sensitive to victims' needs. Reporters prioritize collecting information quickly to meet deadlines, and even those who are well meaning may not be aware of the best ways to approach crime victims. Victims who agree to speak with reporters may need information and support to handle interviewers, photographers, and camera-people. Victim advocates play a key role in helping reporters get crucial information while ensuring victims are treated with sensitivity, and that their name, location, or other private information is not revealed without their consent. This section includes tips to help you navigate this process. *

The purpose of this news release is to generate media coverage for your local National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRRW) activities. The release below is designed to be customized. Edit the release to reflect issues in your community and to highlight local events and commemorations.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

CONTACT:

[Name/Title/Agency]

[Phone number]

[E-mail]

[Your City/Organization] Celebrates National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 10-16

[Customize sub-heading to highlight local events, activities, partnerships]

[City/State] —The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) helps lead communities throughout the country in their annual observances of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRRW) every April by promoting victims' rights, and honoring crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week will be held April 10-16, and the theme—*Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope.*—presents the opportunity to highlight the importance of providing needed services at the earliest stage of victimization. Early intervention helps prevent both further victimization and involvement in the criminal justice system, thus addressing the cycle of violence and restoring hope for the future.

[Your City/County/State/Organization] will observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week with special events and programs, including *[include brief descriptions of activities]*. *[Your City/Organization]* will also commemorate the advancement of victims' rights by honoring *[name, title]* and *[name, title]*, champions in advocating for expanded support and services to communities affected by crime. *[Consider including a quote from a recognized leader or official about the importance of NCVRRW.]*

National Crime Victims' Rights Week honors and celebrates the achievements of the past thirty years in securing rights, protections, and services for victims. The bipartisan Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), passed by Congress in 1984, created a national fund to ease victims' suffering. Financed by fines and penalties paid by offenders, the Crime Victims Fund supports services for victims of all types of crime, including assistance for homicide survivors, survivors of child sexual abuse and victims of human trafficking as well as rape crisis centers and domestic violence programs among others *[customize to highlight local services]*. VOCA also funds victim compensation programs that pay victims' out-of-pocket expenses such as counseling, funeral expenses, and lost wages.

"If victims are to trust that the criminal justice system will work for them, we must meet them where they are—physically, culturally, and emotionally," said Joye E. Frost, Director, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), U.S. Department of Justice. "When we take the time to focus on the victim in the aftermath of crime—to address their needs for safety and justice—we can begin to build trust and restore the hope of those victims and their communities. We all play a role in helping victims as they rebuild their lives."

OVC encourages widespread participation in the week's events and in other victim-related observances throughout the year. The U.S. Department of Justice will host OVC's annual Service Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, April 12, in Washington, DC, to honor outstanding individuals and programs that serve victims of crime. For additional information about this year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week and how to assist victims in your community, please contact *[agency/organization]* at *[area code/telephone number]* or visit *[agency's website]* at *[web address]*. For additional ideas on how to support victims of crime, visit the Office for Victims of Crime website, www.ovc.gov.

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*[Your organization's mission statement/boilerplate] **

Sample Letter to the Editor

Newspapers often print letters in response to previous news items or opinion pieces. By writing a letter to the editor, you can link National Crime Victims' Rights Week to a current local, state, or national issue to show why readers should care about the rights and concerns of crime victims. The following sample cites recent bias-motivated crimes in a community and encourages readers to use National Crime Victims' Rights Week to raise awareness, embrace differences, and emphasize the impact of hate crimes on victims as well as the greater public.

Focus your letter on a specific crime or trend covered by the newspaper. You might ask a local criminal justice official, such as your district attorney or state attorney general, to write a letter explaining the importance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week from his or her perspective.

Before writing your letter, check your newspaper's submission guidelines. Letters to the editor should be brief, no more than 250 to 300 words. Begin by citing the article to which you are responding, and then state your main point. Write two or three short paragraphs to support your argument, and end your letter with a concluding statement. When you submit the letter, include your contact information so that the newspaper can contact you if it decides to print your letter. If the newspaper does not publish your letter, consider submitting it to a local organization that publishes a newsletter, or you may choose to post it on your website. Also post links to the letter on your Facebook, Twitter, and other social media pages.

Hate Has No Place in Our Community

I feel compelled to write after the recent violence in our community fueled by hate. I am saddened by those individuals who fail to recognize the humanity in all of us. We all have different beliefs, experiences, and appearances, but similar dreams and desires such as the desire to be safe, to be valued, and to see our children thrive. The strength of this community is the diversity we all contribute.

These types of bias-motivated crimes divide communities and cause irreparable damage to victims. They send the message that you are not valued; you are not a part of this community. Too many victims suffer in silence and don't seek the support they need to recover because they are afraid of being judged, intimidated, bullied, threatened, or even physically harmed if they share their victimization. All of us have the right to exist without fear that we will be harmed regardless of identity, social status, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or the color of our skin.

April 10-16 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week. This year, let's commemorate this important week by getting to know our neighbors. Take the time to listen, to explore, and to value differences. Communicate through your actions that hate does not have a place in our community, that hate does not live here.

We must work together to end hate violence by confronting and refusing to tolerate or engage in activities that single out certain populations as "less than." We should instead be empowering our community by reaching out and creating connections. Recognize that we all have a role to play. Our community won't heal until we begin building trust and restoring hope to those devastated by these bias-motivated crimes. Together we can stop the violence.

Name
Organization
City, State *

Op-eds are a great opportunity to share an opinion with a wide audience, and they do not necessarily have to be in response to another article. Keep your submission to 800 words or less. Be concise and persuasive. This is your chance to influence opinions, affect policy, and highlight the work you or your organization is doing to support crime victims' rights.

Building a Better Road to Recovery for Child Victims

More and more, we are recognizing the lifelong implications of childhood experiences. Of children who have been victimized, almost two-thirds (64.5%) have been victimized more than once in their lifetime. These repeatedly victimized children are at increased risk for adversity and distress, which is why we need comprehensive victim-centered assessment and care. Without this, many of these children will be further victimized or go on to commit crimes themselves, continuing the victim-perpetrator cycle. Service providers must work together to address the effects of polyvictimization.

Children and teens are at risk for a wide variety of victimization—abuse or neglect in the home, bullying or dating violence at school, sexual abuse or exploitation, or exposure to violence at home or in the street. Polyvictimization occurs when an individual experiences multiple forms of victimization such as bullying at school and abuse in the home. While a single victimization event can cause harm, research shows that polyvictimization causes greater and longer lasting harm than exposure to one type of crime or abuse. This remains true even if the one type of crime or abuse happens repeatedly over time.

Polyvictimized children often face substantial threats to safety, stability, and support in their home, school, and community. They are left without a safe space to take refuge. Living in a constant atmosphere of stress and adversity is believed to limit children's self-esteem, ability to cope, and sense of control. Polyvictims show much higher levels of distress, including anxiety, depression, anger, and PTSD. They are also more likely to experience other hardships throughout their lifetime including illnesses, accidents, family unemployment, parental substance abuse, and mental illness. This increases the likelihood that they will commit crimes as an adult.

Traditionally, when victim service providers, child welfare agencies, schools, mental health providers, and others have worked with child victims, they treat only one form of victimization such as the trauma sustained from sexual abuse. This narrow focus regards victimization as an episode, a passing moment in the child's life rather than the condition of the child's entire lifetime. This failure to recognize the child's life condition severely limits the ability of service providers to restore a sense of safety for the victim and to respond to that victim's complex trauma. It is critical that victim service providers broaden their focus and further assess the child's situation to ensure that there aren't additional pieces of the puzzle that need to be addressed.

This growing understanding of polyvictimization has important implications for the way we respond to child and teen victims. While there are growing numbers of programs to prevent and respond to the victimization of children and teens, these programs have developed largely in isolation from one another. Agencies and organizations must work together and develop strategies to respond to polyvictimization. If service providers assess a child for multiple forms of victimization, they can more adequately respond to the child's needs, perhaps guiding the child away from a future where they, in turn, commit crimes. This would lessen crime rates in their community.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (April 10-16, 2016) offers an opportunity to increase awareness of this issue, reach and serve polyvictimized children, and develop a more evidence-informed approach. The well-being of today's children, and tomorrow's adults, depends on it. *

15-Second PSA

Every year, millions of people's lives are impacted by crime. April 10-16 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time to celebrate progress, raise awareness of victims' rights and services, and stand with those whose lives have been altered by crime. Call *[agency name]* at *[phone number]* or call 855-4-VICTIM or visit VictimConnect.org to learn about rights and options—confidentially and compassionately. *[Customize with local organization contact information.]*

30-Second PSA

Every year, millions of people's lives are impacted by crime. Many will need ongoing care and support. April 10-16 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time to celebrate progress, raise awareness of victims' rights and services, and stand with our families, neighbors, friends, and colleagues whose lives have been forever altered by crime. Reach out, listen, and support them as they recover on their own terms. Call *[agency name]* at *[phone number]* or call 855-4-VICTIM or visit VictimConnect.org to learn about rights and options—confidentially and compassionately. *[Customize with local organization contact information.]*

60-Second PSA

Every year, millions of people's lives are impacted by crime. Many will need ongoing care and resources as they return to work, pay bills, or support their loved ones. April 10-16 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time to celebrate progress, raise awareness of victims' rights and services, and stand with our families, neighbors, friends, and colleagues whose lives have been forever altered by crime. Reach out, listen, and support them as they recover on their own terms. Volunteer to serve at local organizations committed to helping crime victims rebuild their lives. Put together a care package for victims of crime who've had to relocate. There are many ways to give back. We all have a role to play to serve victims, build trust, and restore hope in our communities. Call *[agency name]* at *[phone number]* or call 855-4-VICTIM or visit VictimConnect.org to learn about rights and options—confidentially and compassionately. *[Customize with local organization contact information.]* *

WHAT ARE PSAS AND HOW DO I USE THEM?

PSAs (public service announcements) are short video or audio messages given to radio or television stations to broadcast at no cost to the submitting organization.

HOW DO I GET THEM TO AIR?

First, contact your local radio or television stations to inquire about their policies on airing PSAs and their submission guidelines. Broadcast media (radio and television) are required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to serve "the public interest." Most stations donate portions of their commercial time to non-commercial causes.

Find out who is in charge of selecting which PSAs will run. This person could be the public affairs director, traffic director, program director, promotions manager, or station manager.

Once you've made contact with the stations, inform them that you will be sending a PSA to air. Include basic information about your organization in the delivery, such as a cover letter and pamphlet. Follow up with a phone call to ask if the PSA was received and when it will be aired. Continue to reach out to the station. Persistence is key.

COMMUNITY ACCESS AND PUBLIC TELEVISION

Many towns have local cable (sometimes called community access) and college stations. Locate the name of the station manager and follow the same procedure as above. Many of these stations also air community calendars with information about local events and activities. Submit yours on a regular basis.

YOUR WEBSITE OR SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Also upload the PSAs to your website, Facebook, or YouTube account, and use additional outreach efforts (e.g., press releases, social networking status updates) to drive viewers to your site.

Social media offers powerful tools to assist with your outreach goals. Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, and others provide powerful and extensive forums to publicize events, share information, enlist volunteers, raise funds, and instantly reach communities that share your goals and interests. More than 98% of nonprofits now use some form of social media, making it easier for you to reach the communities you want to engage online.

Social media strategies for National Crime Victims' Rights Week will depend on your organization's overall communications goals, the platforms you now use, your staff's knowledge, and the amount of time and resources you are able to invest in building and maintaining your online presence. Nonprofits of any size or staffing situation can benefit from social engagement. Your campaign should use social media to complement rather than replace your website and traditional media outreach. You don't want to miss the advantages offered by these great tools to enhance your NCVRW outreach.

Social Media Platforms

The most important social media platforms for your campaign are available for free, though many allow you to pay for additional reach to get your message to a larger audience. As you develop your strategies and identify your communications goals, you need to keep in mind the strengths and weaknesses of different social networks, the types of audiences you will be able to reach, the investment they require (if any), and the capabilities they offer to your organization. Among the most important tools are:

Facebook

Whatever your goals or your desired audience, you have a great chance of reaching them on Facebook. Because Facebook has 1.55 billion monthly active users, you may want to start with this tool, especially if you have time to maintain only one social media platform. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), 65 percent of all U.S. adults are on Facebook.

Facebook business pages must be administered by the personal profile of a designated individual who sets up the business or "fan" page. For instructions on how to complete that process, log in and visit Facebook's [signup instructions](#) page. Once you have signed up and established your URL (Uniform Resource Locator), begin posting content, visiting the Facebook pages of organizations in your field, "liking" them, and perhaps sending messages or (where

allowed) posting on their Facebook pages. Post photos, videos, company content, invitations to upcoming events, and links back to your website, and tag them in relevant posts on your own page. Interacting with others will help build your own community. Also join Facebook groups that are relevant to your interests. With some Facebook groups, you may need to send e-mails to invite them to "like" your Facebook page and become one of your fans. The resulting dialogue will help support and shape your Facebook strategy.

Posting pictures is a powerful way to promote engagement, as pictures tend to garner more views, likes, shares, and comments than text alone. Use this to your advantage in your Facebook strategy by posting pictures of your NCVRW events or promotional photos leading up to events. Facebook also supports hashtags, which can be used to categorize content. Include [#NCVRW2016](#) after your NCVRW posts to help others stay up to date on your events!

Twitter

Twitter is a "microblog," an information-sharing network made up of 140-character messages called "tweets." It's an easy way to send and receive links to the latest news and information. Twitter offers instant communication with an online community. Once you have [set up your own account](#), choose a Twitter handle (username) that other users will recognize (often the name or nickname of your organization/agency). Use Twitter to establish instant

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connections with others in your industry or field of interest, and follow a steady stream of ideas, content, links, and resources.

Because Twitter users see themselves as a support network, it is particularly important to begin using the platform by following others and observing what they have to say. It is useful to search for the name of your organization, and search topics and organizations that are of interest. After you set up your account, begin following others, following their followers, retweeting their tweets, and promoting them to your audience. You will then find ways to weigh in on conversations and promote your events, projects, or policies. Learn how to use Follow Friday (#FF) lists that recommend others to follow you. You can also recruit followers by announcing on other platforms (like your Facebook page) that you have joined Twitter, and link back to your Twitter page.

Maximize your Twitter presence by staying engaged in conversations on subjects that are important to you, and by quickly responding to other users' tweets and mentions of your organization or causes. Hashtags are a useful way to become part of a conversation, so make sure to use the most applicable tags, and add [#NCVRW2016](#) to your NCVRW tweets. The most important part of a Twitter campaign is staying engaged with your followers!

Periscope

Periscope is Twitter's new live-streaming video app. It allows the user to broadcast and watch live video in real time from around the world. Twitter's intent was to "build the closest thing to teleportation" and allow anyone from anywhere to experience events and places otherwise inaccessible. It is a powerful application that has elevated social movements and allowed many to witness history. The application also contains more basic features, including the ability to "attend" meetings remotely and share events with the greater public. Note that Periscope video streams are only saved by the application for 24 hours.

YouTube

YouTube, a video platform, is the world's second largest search engine and the third most visited site on the Internet. To post videos to YouTube, you will need a digital camcorder, webcam, digital camera, or cell phone with video capacity, as well as someone who knows how to use those tools. To begin, set up a [YouTube channel](#) for your organization, which will be linked with any other Google accounts you have. Choose a name that matches your brand, and post your channel URL on your Facebook page and other social network profiles. If applicable, apply for a [YouTube Nonprofit Program](#) account, which gives you more features, such as the ability to add clickable "asks" on top of videos and upload longer videos.

If you decide to use YouTube, you might begin by posting a video about your work featuring your staff and success stories. Use YouTube to upload recordings of presentations you've given and share presentation slides and videos of interviews with experts or representatives from your organization who can offer subject-matter expertise. Post links to these videos (or the videos themselves) on your Facebook page, and tweet about them. Engage with the YouTube community by leaving comments and even uploading video responses to the videos of other organizations. Before, during, and after National Crime Victims' Rights Week, YouTube users post great videos on crime victims' rights, which you can re-post and share throughout all of your social media networks. You can also create playlists on your YouTube channel to display your favorite videos that others have posted. YouTube is an ideal way of showcasing your NCVRW events.

Instagram

Instagram is a highly popular photo-sharing site with more than 400 million active users that enables you to upload and share photos one at a time with your online network. Unlike photo archiving sites like [Flickr](#) and [Picasa](#), Instagram allows users to apply filters and other effects to give their

photos special vibrancy or an aged, vintage look. Once you have set up an [Instagram account](#), snap photos of your NCVRW events on your mobile devices and give your followers a sneak peek before you post them on your website. Expand the audience for your photos by “[tagging](#)” them with keywords and hashtags to identify or organize them on Instagram. Be sure to add [#NCVRW2016](#) to your NCVRW posts. If someone in your organization gives an NCVRW presentation, take a photo and post it on Instagram and Facebook, and tweet about it on Twitter. It provides a great opportunity to expand your audience as well as NCVRW publicity. Instagram can also be connected with Facebook and Twitter to automate posting across platforms.

WordPress or Blogger

If you are interested in sharing more in-depth communications with your community, you may want to consider starting a blog (or weblog). [WordPress](#) and [Blogger](#) are two excellent platforms to host your blog. To maintain the interest of your audience, post at least once or twice a week, and be sure to link to your blog from your Facebook and Twitter pages, and vice versa. If you don't have time for a blog, you can always post statements and information on your website, particularly during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

LinkedIn

Use LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network, to connect with any of its three billion users. LinkedIn offers organizations, as well as individuals, the opportunity to set up profiles and network with others, share information, ask questions, participate in discussions, and promote events and causes. LinkedIn users build a presence by inviting others to join their networks and also by joining LinkedIn groups (such as LinkedIn's "Social Media for Nonprofits" group). Search the site for other professionals and organizations in your field, invite them to connect with you, follow them, send messages, ask questions, and join groups

(searchable by name and subject area). Be sure to learn and follow LinkedIn [etiquette](#), such as always responding quickly to invitations to connect, and [LinkedIn's best practices](#) for your company page. Update your profile regularly and arrange your settings so that your connections see each change.

You can also create a [LinkedIn Company Page](#) for your organization. Follow the setup wizard for creating your company profile. Be sure to include a header image and profile image for your page, and focus on keywords from your mission statement throughout your description information. Additionally, [LinkedIn Showcase pages](#) can be used to highlight specific initiatives.

LinkedIn is more of a professional network than Facebook or Twitter, and can be used to ask and answer questions of other professionals in your field. This will bring you the best engagement, and could be a useful way to share ideas about NCVRW events or programming.

Making a Plan

Before diving into social media, meet with your staff to develop a realistic plan. You may be surprised to learn how much time is required to launch and sustain a robust social media presence. *Social Media for Social Good: A How-to Guide for Nonprofits* shares that large nonprofits with successful social media outreach average 15 hours on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube; 5 hours on photo-sharing sites; and 10 hours on their blogs each week.

Such allotments are probably unrealistic for smaller organizations, but it is still possible to launch an effective social media campaign with a much smaller staff. Social media can occupy as much time as you have to dedicate to it. Even devoting a few hours a week to Facebook and Twitter and posting several times a week will help increase connections and exposure.

How to Create a Social Media Campaign

You should also clarify your goals in using social media to focus your efforts and to help determine which social networks are right for you. What do you want to accomplish? What audiences are you trying to reach, and what do you want them to know? How do you want them to engage? If you want to show off images or video of your NCVRW events, and let your community know what you've been doing, then Facebook and YouTube are probably your best options. If you want to stay engaged in a real-time, back-and-forth conversation on trending issues, you should put your efforts into Facebook and Twitter. Do you want to have a Q&A with other professionals in your field? LinkedIn has you covered.

Your overall and NCVRW-related social media goals should also be specific (e.g., reach 200 local Facebook users with NCVRW messages; invite five new groups to your NCVRW events). Aim to make your goals measurable, achievable, important to your organization, and time-limited. For example, in a period of two months, you would like to gain 200 local Facebook fans for your organization and sign them up for an NCVRW event. Think about how you will follow up with these fans throughout the year. Then choose the social media tool that will best suit your goals, assign appropriate staff members to manage these media, and create a balanced [social media policy](#) for your organization. Now you are ready!

If you decide to use social media, you should remember that these tools are two-way communications vehicles for sharing information and supporting users—not a one-way bulletin board to promote your organization. Back-and-forth conversations and engaging with the content of your followers, rather than simply relaying information, are key to your success. This is especially true for Twitter, where experts suggest tweeting or retweeting at least 10 times for every tweet devoted strictly to your organization's goals. Actively engaging will give you better results and build a community with deeper interest in your work.

Also, the quality of the content you post is the key to your success. Organizations with successful social media campaigns focus on providing content that is new and of value to their visitors. By posting excellent content, sharing generously, and responding quickly on all your platforms, you will build the community and the reputation you desire.

Note: The National Center for Victims of Crime invites you to share NCVRW photos and information with us, and we will happily post it to our network and retweet your messages to help get the word out about your events. We encourage you to do the same. Message content to us at <https://www.facebook.com/ncvcfan> or e-mail webmaster@ncvc.org during the month of April. If you are on Twitter, please follow us at [@CrimeVictimsOrg](https://twitter.com/CrimeVictimsOrg) and tweet using the [#NCVRW2016](#) hashtag. *

Below are status updates to post on Facebook and Twitter in the lead-up to and during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The Twitter updates are all 140 characters or fewer, and ready to use. You may use these items on any date you choose. We encourage you to also write your own status updates (see sidebar), especially to alert your audience about your local events.

Facebook Status Updates

Below is a list of status updates to use as Facebook posts. In your posts, you can also include related photos or graphics (e.g., the 2016 NCVRW logo), as well as your fans' responses.

- When victims feel understood, heard, and supported, they are more likely to seek services. Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope. #NCVRW2016 www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2016
- This year we highlight work being done to restore trust in underserved communities, and with victims of repeated trauma. Our theme is Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope. Learn more here and get involved: www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2016
- Trust may be of particular concern in certain communities that may feel isolated from or invisible to mainstream service providers and the criminal justice system. This year we work to "serve victims, build trust, and restore hope." Get your resources to be a part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week here: www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2016
- By providing early intervention and victim services, we establish trust from the beginning for victims, which in turn restores hope for healing and recovery. #NCVRW2016 www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2016
- Children who suffer repeat victimization (polyvictimization) or who frequently witness traumatic incidents in their communities may lose trust in their loved ones, their neighborhoods, authority figures, the justice system, and themselves. This week we focus on rebuilding trust and restoring hope. #NCVRW2016
- Our efforts cannot succeed without local law enforcement, victim advocates, prosecutors, probation and parole officers, child and family services, community leaders, community members, educators, coaches, parents, and others. Everyone plays a role in serving victims. #NCVRW2016
- The National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2016 theme is "Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope." We must reach victims where they are—physically, culturally, emotionally—if they are to trust that the system will work for them. #NCVRW2016
- Share photos and announcements about your NCVRW planning and events at www.facebook.com/ncvcfan. The National Center for Victims of Crime will share your posts with others on Facebook and its other social media outreach throughout April.
- See past National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Projects via the National Association for VOCA Assistance Administrators and find ways to partner with advocates in your community. www.navaa.org/cap/previous.html
- National Crime Victims' Rights Week begins April 10. Visit the Office for Victims of Crime National Crime Victims' Rights Week website for information about resources and help in planning events and activities. www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2016
- Today marks the beginning of National Crime Victims' Rights Week! How do you plan on commemorating this week? Let us know!
- Too many victims are not empowered in their recovery and healing. Work with us this week to reach all

Sample Social Media Status Updates

populations, serve victims, build trust and restore hope #NCVRW2016.

- Looking for information about victims of assault, domestic violence, stalking, child abuse, sexual assault, and other crimes? Download the Help Series brochures from the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. www.ovc.gov/pubs/helpseries/index.html
- How have you used the theme video from National Crime Victims' Rights Week? Tell us in the comments and share your activities with other activists.
- Visit www.victimsofcrime.org/training for updates about the National Center for Victims of Crime National Conference in Philadelphia this September, a great opportunity to learn from and network with others.
- Visit the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards for information on crime victim compensation in your state: www.nacvcb.org/index.asp?sid=6
- Follow the National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide Partners to learn about the activities of other victim advocates and to get the resources you need for your NCVRW 2016 activities. See Section 7 of the Resource Guide for the partner list: www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2016
- Share "Taking Action: An Advocate's Guide to Assisting Victims of Financial Fraud" with your followers and spread the word about the dangers of fraud this National Crime Victims' Rights Week. www.victimsofcrime.org/taking-action
- April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month! Visit our partners at HHS to get informed and learn how you can help protect kids. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/preventionmonth>

TIP: EMBEDDING LINKS IN FACEBOOK

To embed a link in your Facebook status, copy the URL into the status field and wait momentarily until Facebook generates a thumbnail and page description. Then delete the URL text you copied, enter the rest of your status text, and post.

- April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month! Find out how to support victims of sexual assault in our schools, college campuses, workplaces, and the wider community. www.nsvrc.org/saam/sexual-assault-awareness-month-home
- This National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we reaffirm our commitment to creating a victim service and criminal justice response that assists all victims of crime and works to build trust and hope in underserved communities. We express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for those community members, victim service providers, and criminal justice professionals who are committed to improving our response to all victims of crime so that they may find relevant assistance, support, justice, and peace. www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2016

Twitter Status Updates

- National Crime Victims' Rights Week begins April 10. Visit www.ovc.gov for information about resources and events. #NCVRW2016
- National Crime Victims' Rights Week is April 10-16, 2016. Search #NCVRW2016 to stay connected!
- Victims should be given the assistance they need to make informed decisions for their own lives! Follow #NCVRW2016 to get involved!

- Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope. Search #NCVRW2016 to learn how you can help victims of crime!
- We must reach victims where they are—physically, culturally, emotionally—if they are to trust that the system will work for them #NCVRW2016
- We reaffirm our commitment to creating a victim service and criminal justice response that assists all victims of crime #NCVRW2016
- Repeat victimization is a pervasive problem. Learn what you can do to help restore hope at <http://ow.ly/TdgJF> #NCVRW2016
- National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2016 starts today! This year's theme is "Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope." #NCVRW2016
- When victims are heard, and supported, they are more likely to seek services. "Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope." #NCVRW2016
- Visit <http://ow.ly/TbDZB> to sign up for Resource Guide information. #NCVRW2016
- Download the #NCVRW2016 Resource Guide free at <http://ow.ly/TdgJF> for tips on observing National Crime Victims' Rights Week.
- Free resources are available to help victims of financial fraud this #NCVRW2016. Download here: <http://ow.ly/q1NmI>
- Download free awareness posters for your #NCVRW2016 activities! <http://ow.ly/q1NrP>
- Looking for ways to get involved in #NCVRW2016? Find ways to raise awareness here: <http://ow.ly/q1NuA>
- April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Visit <http://ow.ly/TbMtl> or follow @NSVRC for info! #NCVRW2016
- Get statistics and talking points for your #NCVRW2016 activities: <http://ow.ly/TbMxb>
- Do you know any victims of crime? Have you been victimized? Get helpful info from the #NCVRW2016 Resource Guide: <http://ow.ly/TdgJF>
- Visit <http://ow.ly/TdgJF> Section 7 to learn more about the National Crime Victims' Rights Week guide partners #NCVRW2016
- Need inspiration for your #NCVRW2016 event? See Section 2 of the NCVRW Resource Guide for #victim centered quotes <http://ow.ly/TdgJF>
- See Section 2 of the #NCVRW2016 Resource Guide for other key events in 2016 <http://ow.ly/TdgJF> and stay active in supporting victims
- Learn how to protect yourself from fraud this #NCVRW2016 and how to assist others: <http://ow.ly/q1NmI>
- OVC offers a calendar of upcoming #victim assistance events. Learn more or add your training at <http://ow.ly/q1NDo> #NCVRW2016
- Want to network with #victim advocates? Visit VictimsofCrime.org/training for updates on the @CrimeVictimsOrg National Conference in Philadelphia #NCVRW2016
- OVC hosts a searchable database of victims' rights laws. Learn more: <http://ow.ly/q1NM9> #NCVRW2016
- Stalking is a crime, not a joke. Get the facts: <http://ow.ly/q1NQj> @SRC_NCVC #NCVRW2016
- OVC's TTAC offers free trainings on victim advocacy and assistance. Learn more here: <http://ow.ly/rpGhK> #NCVRW2016
- April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month! Learn more at: <http://ow.ly/rpLET> #NCVRW2016

Sample Social Media Status Updates

- April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month!
Get resources for your campaign: <http://ow.ly/rpLR7> *

MORE TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

In addition to Facebook and Twitter status updates, use the following ideas to generate more NCVRW posts on your social media sites.

- Download NCVRW Theme Artwork from the [Office for Victims of Crime website](#), including NCVRW-specific Facebook cover and profile images.
- Post photos or videos of your organization's NCVRW planning or events.
- Post photos of your NCVRW event speakers on your Facebook page (in advance of the events), and promote them on Twitter and your other social media.
- [Download the app](#) for Instagram, a photo-editing platform for iPhone or Android users that converts your photos to clear, small images and allows you to add filters to those images. Instagram interfaces with Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms.
- Upload posters from the Office for Victims of Crime's [gallery of awareness posters](#) on crime- and victim-related topics to your social media platforms.
- Post links to NCVRW op-eds or news releases in your local newspaper or television station website.
- Pull relevant statistics from the newly designed Crime and Victimization Fact Sheets in Section 6 of the NCVRW Resource Guide.
- Post links to the NCVRW statements or proclamations of your local or state officials (and include brief blurbs about these statements).
- Allow other Facebook users to post stories, event reminders, pictures, and updates on your wall. Change your Facebook settings to "open settings," and be sure to monitor your wall consistently for negative or offensive posts.
- Check the Facebook pages of the *2016 NCVRW Resource Guide* Partners in Section 7 and "like" these partners or link to them.
- Ask your Facebook fans and Twitter followers to post your status updates on their social media networks.
- Post current and recent NCVRW videos on YouTube.

Media coverage of crime greatly influences public perceptions about victims. Particularly in the immediate aftermath of crimes, as reporters rush to meet deadlines, their reporting may not reflect the desired sensitivity to traumatized victims. Because many television and print reporters do not receive training in how to interact with victims, you have an opportunity to help them approach crime stories with sensitivity. As a victim advocate who understands the perspective of victims and knows what reporters need to include their stories, you can play a key role in advocating for victim-sensitive coverage of crime.

Tips for Reporters

In writing news stories about crime, reporters have the difficult task of seeking interviews from victims and conducting those interviews in an ethical manner when victims agree to speak. Advocates can help reporters prepare to speak with victims by offering suggestions about how to approach the victim so that he or she feels comfortable and safe. Educate reporters on how to approach crime victims by sharing the following guidelines.¹

Asking for the Interview

- Recognize that the victim may be coping with shock and trauma;
- Approach the victim without equipment—notebooks, tape recorders, cameras, and lights—and try to make a human connection;
- Introduce yourself as a reporter, give the victim your name and title, and briefly explain what you hope to achieve with your story;
- Express concern for the victim by saying, “I am sorry for what happened to you” or “I am sorry for your loss;”
- Ask victims how they would prefer to be addressed, and observe that preference in all your questions;

- Give the victim a reason to speak with you by explaining the purpose of the story, the fact that it will be published, and why the victim’s participation is important;
- Tell the victim how much time you need and observe that time limit;
- Courteously accept the victim’s refusal if he or she is unwilling to be interviewed;
- If the victim says no, express interest in a future interview, leave a business card, or send an e-mail with your contact information, and ask for the names of others who may be willing to speak.

Logistics and Other Considerations

- Make the victim comfortable—offer a chair or suggest a comfortable, safe place to talk;
- Respect victims’ space—because people in trauma often do not want to be touched, hand the microphone to the victim and explain how to adjust it;
- Ask permission to record the interview;
- Clarify ground rules—explain that anything victims say may be used in the interview and give victims permission to turn off the microphone if they want to say something they do not want included.

¹ Bonnie Bucqueroux and Anne Seymour, *A Guide for Journalists Who Report on Crime and Crime Victims*, (Washington, DC: Justice Solutions, 2009), 2-10, accessed December 20, 2015, <http://www.mediacrimevictimguide.com/journalistguide.pdf>.

Victim Advocacy during Interviews

With the help of victim advocates, reporters can approach the interview with sensitivity toward the victim and the understanding that he or she may be undergoing trauma associated with the crime. Advocates who are present during the interview can step in if the reporter's questions become too pointed or difficult or if the victim seems to be getting upset. By making victims' needs a priority, advocates can keep the interview on track and encourage the reporter to do so as well.

Tips for Victims

Advocating for victims with the media also includes helping victims decide whether to accept interviews, how to minimize invasions of their privacy, and how to exercise their rights and options in dealing with reporters. Advocates can also help victims anticipate questions and prepare how to answer them.

Before the Interview

By giving victims the following checklist of questions and walking through it with them, you can help victims decide whether to participate in an interview:

- **What are your goals in speaking to the media?**
What purpose do you hope the interview will serve? Will it help the community learn more about your loved one or understand the impact of crime on victims? Are you willing to answer questions from reporters who might not understand your pain or your point of view?
- **Would the interview invade your privacy?** If you are still struggling with the emotional, physical, or financial impact of the crime, would speaking to a reporter disturb you or make you feel violated? You may want to discuss the pros and cons with a victim advocate before making your decision.
- **Does refusing the interview increase or decrease your control over what is published about the crime?** Denying an interview will not prevent publicity about your case. If the story is newsworthy, the media will publish the story with or without interviewing you. Also, an interview may provide you with an opportunity to offer your perspective on the crime.
- **Would you prefer that someone else speak for you?** If you would rather not be interviewed, you may ask someone else—an attorney, victim advocate, clergy member, another family member, or friend—to represent you in media interviews. That person can also release written statements on your behalf or accompany you to interviews if you decide to accept them.
- **Would granting an interview affect the investigation or prosecution of the crime?** Giving an interview may compromise the investigation or prosecution of a crime. You may want to speak with an advocate or attorney before deciding to grant an interview.
- **Do you want to set conditions for the interview?**
Although reporters and producers may not agree to the conditions you suggest, if they want your interview they will most likely comply with reasonable requests. You have the right to ask or express your wishes regarding:
 - > Time and location of the interview
 - > Visiting the set or location before an interview
 - > Advance information about questions, the reporter's angle, or plans for using your interview
 - > Requesting a victim's advocate, lawyer, or support person be present
 - > Issues you will not discuss
 - > Requesting a specific reporter or producer
 - > Protecting your identity (through silhouettes and electronic distortion of your voice)

- > Excluding children and other family members from the interview
- > Excluding photos and other images you find offensive
- > Excluding offenders or other participants to whom you might object

- You may refuse a follow-up interview, even if you have previously agreed to be interviewed a second time.

Victim advocates can play a key role in mediating between reporters and victims, especially when victims are feeling vulnerable and under stress. The victim, his or her family, and the wider community have an important interest in ensuring that media coverage is sensitive, accurate, and does not put the victim under duress or at risk. *

Preparing Victims for the Interview

Share the following tips with victims who agree to interviews:

- Bring someone to provide support.
- Prepare for the interview by having an advocate list questions the reporter may ask and rehearsing responses.
- Refuse to answer a question by:
 - > Polite refusal: "I'm sorry, but I don't want to talk about that."
 - > Bridging: Change the subject to what YOU want to talk about. Answer by saying, "what is really important about that issue is..." and then talk about what you think the audience should know.
- Never speak "off the record." Reporters may publish or broadcast anything you say.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, simply say you don't know. Don't guess or speculate.
- You may request a correction if the article that is published is inaccurate or you are quoted out of context. Newspapers and other outlets may publish corrections and television news may correct serious errors (although the option to do so is theirs). You can also complain to management at the news outlet prior to publication or broadcast if the reporter was aggressive, insensitive, or obtained information dishonestly.