



TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

- FAIRNESS
- RESPECT
- PRIVACY



LIMITED CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

As your Victim Specialist, I am here to assist you as you go through the criminal justice process. However, you should know that I work as part of a team with the FBI agent and personnel from the U.S. Attorney's Office. Discussions that you have with me may not be considered completely confidential. As part of the team, there may be times when I need to share information you provide with the other team members. If you have questions about limited confidentiality, you may contact your Victim Specialist for clarification.

On behalf of the FBI Office for Victim Assistance, we are committed to providing you and your family with the most appropriate services to assist in reducing the effects of trauma. Your Victim Specialist is highly trained to assess your needs and link you to the best resources available. It is important that you work closely with your Victim Specialist. Your Victim Specialist can assist in making your experience with the criminal justice process a smooth one.

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

FBI Victim Specialist:

Name _____

Phone _____

FBI Special Agent:

Name _____

Phone _____

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Office for Victim Assistance
J. Edgar Hoover Building, Room 3329
935 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington D.C. 20535
(202) 324-3000

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SETTING LIMITS AND KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

If you decide to speak with the media, you can set limitations and take control of the interview ahead of time, by knowing your rights to:

- Choose the time and place of the interview;
- Choose or refuse to meet with a specific reporter, or any newspaper/magazine, or radio/television station;
- Choose to have a support person with you during the interview;
- Know and agree to the angle of the story;
- Request and/or require the interview questions in advance;
- Choose whether the interview will be "live" or taped ahead of time;
- Request that offensive photographs or visuals be omitted from being aired or published;
- Provide the media with a list of questions that are "off limits";
- Request to speak with one reporter at a time, rather than in a press conference type format;
- Refuse to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable;
- Stop the interview at any time, even if it is a live interview; and/or,
- Demand a retraction of any inaccurate or erroneous information.

INTRODUCTION

When you or a family member/friend has been a victim of a crime, the media may be interested in speaking with you. The decision to speak with, or not speak with, the media, can be a difficult one. There are several factors to keep in mind as you consider this decision.

Keep in mind that there will likely be an investigation related to the crime that has occurred. You will want to consult with the investigator or Victim Specialist prior to speaking with the media to ensure that you do not jeopardize the investigation or future prosecution.

You are entitled to your privacy and it is your choice whether you want to speak with the media. You have the right to say "no". A Victim Specialist can help you weigh the pros and cons of speaking with the press.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

CHOOSING WHETHER OR NOT TO SPEAK WITH THE MEDIA

Reasons why you might choose to speak with the media:

- To honor your loved one;
- To provide accurate information and prevent rumors;
- To assist you with your healing process; and/or,
- To maintain public focus, interest and attention on the case or investigative efforts.

Reasons why you might choose not to speak with the media:

- To maintain privacy;
- To prevent jeopardizing the investigation;
- To prevent experience of re-victimization; and/or,
- The media reports, which may be comprised from a variety of sources, may be inaccurate and/or may not be portrayed in a manner that is acceptable to you.



ADDITIONAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER

You may choose to appoint a family spokesperson to represent you. This individual can help protect your privacy. He/she can also screen your phone calls, answer your door, and/or release your written statements.

Do not let children talk to the media without an adult present.

You may want to arrange for family briefing times and set specific meeting times for media interviews so that the media will not try to make contact with you at all times throughout the day.

All journalists must identify themselves and their organization. It is your choice with whom and by which media outlet you wish to be interviewed.

Take time to gather your thoughts, as you do not have to speak to the media on the spot. You may also prepare a written statement instead of speaking directly to a media representative.

