

Table of Contents



I. Introduction	p. 2
a. Overview	p. 3
b. Your Feedback	p. 4
c. Fact Sheet.....	p. 5
d. Myths & Misconceptions.....	p. 6
e. Self-Assessment Materials.....	p. 7



II. Advertising/Public Service Announcements.....	p. 10
a. Print materials	p. 11
b. Radio PSAs & Public Affairs Programming	p. 18



III. Media Outreach Materials	p. 20
a. General Considerations.....	p. 21
b. Media Event Ideas	p. 22
c. Brown Bag Lunches	p. 23
d. News Conferences.....	p. 28
e. Editorial Board Meetings.....	p. 35
f. Letters to the Editor.....	p. 39
g. Guest Columns	p. 41



IV. Employer Outreach & Materials	p. 43
a. Ideas for Partnership.....	p. 44
b. Model Employer Outreach Materials	p. 45



This project was supported by Award No. 99-DG-G03-7386 by the Family Violence Prevention Center, Office of Justice Programs through the State of Ohio, Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services.

Family Violence Prevention Center



Coordinating Ohio's Resources for Safer Families

A program of the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services

140 E. Town St., 14th Fl., Columbus, OH 43215 • Phone (614) 466-7782 • Toll-Free (614) 448-4842

Introduction



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Overview



Dear Fellow Family Violence Prevention Advocate:

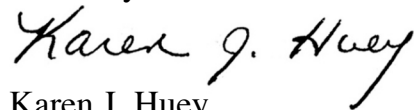
As we begin to prepare for National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October) this year, we recognize this is an important opportunity to collaborate with you in raising awareness about this critical issue in every Ohio community.

As the local resource dedicated to preventing and/or addressing family violence, October will be a key month for you to reach out to your community and build awareness about your services. The Ohio Family Violence Prevention Center is committed to working with you to increase public understanding and facilitate your local outreach efforts.

To that end, we have developed this Statewide Media Campaign Toolkit. The toolkit contains two main components: media outreach materials and employer outreach materials. All of the templates and ideas in this kit are for your use in promoting the services and issues that are important for your organization.

We see this toolkit as one way for us to strategically use our resources in support of your local efforts. We hope you will find it useful.

Sincerely,



Karen J. Huey

Director

Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services



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Fact Sheet

The following fact sheet is for your use as background about the Family Violence Prevention Center and the issue of family violence.

Family Violence

- Family violence is the physical, emotional and/or psychological abuse of a partner, spouse, child(ren) or other family members, and any of these can be a victim or a perpetrator.
- Problems and consequences associated with family violence are not exclusive to the families involved. The residual effects of family violence exhaust a community's resources.
- Family violence jeopardizes a community's safety, health, welfare, and economic stability through:
 - Increasing medical expenses
 - Declining productivity in the workplace
 - Escalating costs for social services
 - Eroding a community's sense of security and togetherness
 - Perpetuating the cycle of violence
- Some statistics:
 - Half of all marriages involve at least one episode of domestic violence. Victim Assistance Program, 2001
 - Police records indicate domestic disputes make up the greatest percentage of calls and are the most dangerous. Victim Assistance Program, 2001
 - Nearly 25 percent of women and about 7 percent of men said they have been raped and /or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse or partner at some time in their lives. U.S. Justice Department's National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2000.

Ohio's Family Violence Prevention Center

The mission of the Family Violence Prevention Center is to provide leadership for a coordinated effort to reduce and prevent family violence in Ohio. We deliver on that mission through leadership, collaboration and awareness.

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Myths & Misconceptions

Myth #1: Family Violence is a private issue.

NOT TRUE.

Problems and consequences associated with family violence are not exclusive to the families involved. The residual effects of family violence exhaust a community's resources.

- 44% of cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference on Mayors identified domestic violence as the primary cause of homelessness. Waxman, Laura & Reny Trupin, A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities, 1997
- In a 1994 survey of senior executives of Fortune 1,000 companies, 66% of the respondents believed that a company's financial performance would benefit from addressing the issue of domestic violence among its employees. Nearly half of the executives believe domestic violence has a harmful effect on their company's productivity, attendance and cost of medical insurance. Eighty percent of the respondents said domestic violence affects employees from all walks of life. Women's Work Program, Liz Claiborne, Inc., 1994



Myth #2: Family Violence is not a problem in my community.

NOT TRUE.

Family violence affects people in every community and people from all walks of life.

- Every five days, an Ohioan is killed by domestic violence. Global Village, 1998
- Over 70,000 women in Ohio may need protection from marital rape. Victim Assistance Program, 2001



Myth #3: If it were that bad, an abused woman would just leave.

NOT TRUE.

- The most dangerous time for a woman who is being abused is when she attempts to leave. U.S. Dept. of Justice, National Crime Victim Survey, 1995

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Self-Assessment

Before moving forward with external outreach to local media and employers, it is important to assess your internal capabilities for such outreach.

Every organization is different in terms of its capacity to perform outreach – one organization may have a dedicated communication/public relations staff to implement the enclosed ideas, while another may have a one or two person staff, making time for outreach activities more difficult to come by.

However, it is vital for every organization to inform the people and leaders in its community about the important role it plays in preventing and raising awareness of family violence in its part of the state.

The following pages contain a checklist of issues for consideration prior to and during your outreach activities to help you frame your local outreach plan.

Things to Consider:

1. Know Your Audience

Make a list of those groups that you consider your target audiences. Be as specific as you can, listing names and organizations when possible. These might include:

- Victims of domestic violence
- Abusers
- Children affected by domestic violence
- Law enforcement officials
- Churches
- Local legislators and public officials
- Community leaders
- Business leaders
- Women's groups
- Health care providers



Once you have listed all potential audiences, go through the list and prioritize them. Your first three to five priorities are your target audiences. All of your communication efforts should focus on these audiences first, with the others falling in priority order.

Your target audiences can help you determine where you focus your time and energy. For instance, if you want to reach older adults in your community, your primary audiences might be senior centers, meals-on-wheels providers and health care providers. If you want to reach out to children in your community, these audiences would include parents, school officials and youth organizations.



2. Identify All Local Media Contacts

To facilitate the media outreach section of this toolkit, you will want to have a local media list. This list should include names of media outlets in your area, including television stations, radio stations, cable news groups, news papers (daily and weekly papers), and local magazines or newsletters.

Your list should contain the names of the outlets, phone number, fax number, e-mail (if possible), and address. In addition, you will want a contact name. Newspaper editors, radio news directors, and television news assignment editors are generally a good starting point. You will also want to list any “friendly” reporters who have already worked on stories with your organization. They will be important contacts as you move forward in your local campaign – as they already have familiarity with your organization.



3. Appoint a Spokesperson

Your organization may already have a person who is designated to speak to the media and/or public officials about issues that arise. As you begin outreach efforts, you may want to increase your pool of spokespeople to include people who have been assisted by your organization, community leaders who support your efforts and/or important donors and business leaders who have sponsored your organization. Make a list with names, titles and phone numbers of these spokespeople for easy reference.



4. Frame Your Message

You will want to provide each spokesperson with general information about your organization. You may have a brochure that serves in this capacity. If not, simply create a one-page fact sheet about your organization that can be used by spokespeople when talking to the media and can also be used as a leave-behind when you have met with media outlets or other audiences.

A good fact sheet includes:

- What your organization is
- What important function it serves in the community
- Two to three key services or examples of service
- Contact information



5. Identify Potential Partners

Partnering with key businesses/employers in your community can help you gain access to a broader audience, providing funding or other donations to your cause, and act as a credible resource on behalf of your organization within the private sector.

You will want to develop a list of local employers. This list should contain large and small employers in your community, especially those with whom you have a developed relationship.

Finally, it is important to reach out to the organizations that share a mutual goal or mission with you. You should begin your local efforts by including these organizations in your planning efforts. Meet with them and explain your goals with this campaign and include them whenever possible. Remember: “two heads are better than one.”



Advertising & Public Service Announcements

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Print Materials



To help you reach out to local newspapers and to provide you with artwork to create posters, fliers and advertisements for local events, we have developed several one-page designs that can be used in a variety of ways.

As you will see, the messages are targeted to two separate audiences – some speak directly to victims of domestic violence, while the others speak to the community surrounding the victim or the victim’s family and friends.

We have provided a blank space at the bottom of each page, where you can insert your organization’s name and phone number, as well as a logo.

You can use these materials in a variety of ways. Some ideas might include:

- Create posters by using 14 x 17 paper to hang in community centers, grocery stores and other public areas.
- Partner with your local newspaper to obtain donated advertising space.
- Create fliers to insert into church bulletins, distribute at county fairs and festivals.
- Talk to local restaurant/bar owners and managers of local gyms to see if they will allow you to hang the fliers in restrooms/locker rooms (where privacy is at a maximum).



Radio PSAs & Public Affairs Programming

Local radio stations offer an excellent opportunity to get the word out about your organization, highlight specific programs and events, and provide valuable information to the station's listeners.

As part of their Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licensing process, radio stations commit a certain amount of time each week to public affairs and community service programming. These policies can vary significantly at the discretion of the station's owners and management, and they may include both local and national programs to fill this commitment. You and your organization can serve as a valuable resource for the stations by providing important information as a benefit to their listening audience.

The best way to work with your local radio station(s) is to identify and contact the station's **public affairs or public service director**. In many markets, this person may also serve as the station's **news director**. All materials you submit to the station and contacts you make should go through the person responsible for public and community service.

The opportunities on each station will be different. Some may accept written PSAs, some may accept pre-recorded public service announcements and some may offer extended-length public affairs interviews. Below are guidelines for each.

Written PSAs

Radio stations often accept written copy for public service announcements. They will then use an on-air personality from their station to record the written copy into a PSA format. Occasionally, stations will also read these PSAs "live" on the air during regular programming. Provide the public service director with a timely, informative script that includes readable lengths of 10 seconds, 15 seconds and 30 seconds. We have provided sample scripts on the following page to help you in this effort.

Pre-Recorded PSAs

Radio stations may use pre-recorded public service announcements to fill available commercial time or to fulfill an FCC commitment. These vary from ten to thirty seconds in length. Because of cost considerations related to production, you may wish to rely on statewide PSA distribution to fill this niche. Should you decide to produce a local pre-recorded announcement, you will want to provide the station with an audio tape that features your director, board president or a client speaking about your organization or event in a 10 second, 15 second and 30 second version. Before producing a pre-recorded announcement, check with your local stations to be sure they will accept and use this type of PSA.

Public Affairs Programming

For many stations, the FCC commitment is fulfilled by airing a weekly or monthly public affairs program. These taped programs often air on weekend mornings and are recorded before they are aired on the station. The host of the program will interview the representative of your organization, often for ten to fifteen minutes. For this type of program, you will want to have a specific topic in mind, keeping in mind that you have a longer amount of time to fill. This type of program is ideal for special events, such as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, or local events planned by your organization. You will want to provide background information, such as fact sheets, statistics and other key information, to the interviewer in advance so that he or she can adequately prepare questions for the interview.

Sample PSA Scripts

Public Service Announcement Script (30 seconds)

Family violence can happen to any family member and it can be physical, emotional or even psychological abuse. The month of October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and it's time we all step forward to help stop the cycle of violence in our community. If you need help, or know someone who needs help, please contact {LOCAL ORGANIZATION AND PHONE NUMBER HERE}. Family violence: It is not a private issue. It's a public issue. And it's a crime. This message is brought to you by Ohio's Family Violence Prevention Center.

Public Service Announcement Script (60 seconds)

Family violence can happen to anyone. It could be your friend, your neighbor, your family member, your co-worker.... Or it could be happening to you. We don't have to tolerate family violence in our community. The month of October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and it's time we all step forward to help stop the cycle of violence in our community. If you need help, or know someone who needs help, please contact {LOCAL ORGANIZATION AND PHONE NUMBER HERE}. Family violence: It is not a private issue. It's a public issue. And it's a crime. This message is brought to you by Ohio's Family Violence Prevention Center.



Media Outreach Materials



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General Considerations



The following materials can be used as a guide in developing a local media campaign during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In addition, you may find the materials are helpful year-round in generating ongoing awareness about family violence.

We have provided materials on the following outreach efforts for your use:

- Media Event Ideas
- Brown Bag Lunches
- News Conferences
- Editorial Board Meetings
- Letters to the Editor
- Guest Columns



Media Event Ideas



Listed below are some ideas for generating media interest in your organization and domestic violence. We hope these ideas will serve as a catalyst for additional ideas you and your organization can develop. We have provided instructions and templates for developing these ideas (and your own ideas) in the following pages.

1. Host a kick-off event or news conference for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
2. Distribute a printed statement with comments from your organization when your local community experiences a domestic violence issue.
3. Call to invite the media when you are speaking to a local organization about family violence issues.
4. Host a round table luncheon to educate the media about terms and jargon used in family violence prevention circles. Also discuss the media's role and responsibility in reporting domestic violence situations.
5. Announce large donations or grants by hosting a check presentation and photo opportunity at your facility. Use a large poster-size check for the photo.



Brown Bag Lunches



Description

When you want to reach out to all your local media to provide comprehensive information on your organization, particularly on complex issues, you may wish to schedule a brown bag lunch (or breakfast) for local media. This is also an excellent opportunity to establish and build upon relationships your organization has with key reporters and editors in your local market.

In basic terms, the brown bag event is an opportunity to invite media to your facility to provide a detailed briefing and background on issues of importance to your organization. For example, if the Ohio General Assembly was considering legislation that altered services for victims of domestic violence, you might wish to invite local media to attend a breakfast or luncheon event to offer your local perspective on the proposed legislation.

A signature event, such as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, also may offer an opportunity for this type of briefing with local media. Inclusion of timely, localized information (such as interviews with clients and local direct service providers) and local statistics will also help ensure the success of your media event.

This event is somewhat informal in nature; however, you must be fully prepared and provide insightful information for attending media. Materials must be created, including packets of information and additional available resources. You can invite media of all genre, including newspaper reporters, as well as radio and television station reporters and news directors. Recognizing the fact that most media representatives will be on a tight time schedule, take care to ensure that your event can be completed in approximately one hour. Media will appreciate this effort and will be more likely to attend a similar event held at a later date.

Following is additional information that will help you design and execute a successful brown bag event.



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Task List

The following is a general list of tasks to be completed to develop and hold a brown bag media event.

- Identify media to be invited
- Identify topics to be addressed with attending media
- Develop an agenda for the event (sample agenda to follow)
- Develop a media advisory/invitation for the event (sample advisory to follow)
- Update local statistics and information as available
- Identify organization participants, such as executive director, board leadership, clients served, etc.
- Identify resource for brown bag food, such as catered boxed lunches, breakfast food, etc. dependent on time of event
- Develop media information kits:
 - Fact sheets
 - Key spokespeople available for interviews, with biographies
 - Additional resources, such as statewide organizations or web sites
 - Supporting documentation, such as background on specific issues, legislation, special events, etc.
- Develop and distribute media advisory/invitation
- Develop any necessary presentation materials, such as slides, overheads or charts
- Place follow up telephone calls to encourage attendance
- Hold event
- Follow up on any areas of interest expressed by attending media
- Develop and send thank you notes to those media attending brown bag event



Sample Agenda Outline

Following is a suggested agenda to follow during a one-hour brown bag media event.

EVENT	AMOUNT OF ALLOTTED TIME
Welcome and introductions	5 minutes
Informal discussion while eating lunches	10 minutes
Review of contents of media information kit	5 minutes
Formal remarks and presentation by organization officials	15-20 minutes
Question and answer period	15 minutes
Thank you and departure	5 minutes



Sample Media Advisory/Invitation

Below is a suggested format to utilize when inviting media to a brown bag event. This should be distributed approximately two weeks prior to the event. Follow up contact will likely be necessary to determine attendance.

WHO:	Name of your organization.
WHAT:	Description of event – brown bag luncheon/breakfast, media briefing, etc.
WHEN:	Day, date and time of your event.
WHERE:	Location of your event, including address, suite/floor number, parking information and any other pertinent details.
PROGRAM INFORMATION:	Include an overview of what will be discussed at the brown bag event, including issues of note, key speakers of prominence, and any other relevant details.
CONTACT PERSON:	Who will be the key contact for media interested in attending the event?
RSVP INFORMATION:	Who media interested in attending should call or contact and by what date they must RSVP.



Making Follow Up Calls

Assuming you have distributed your media advisory and invitation to the brown bag event two weeks prior to the event, you will likely find it necessary to call each of the invited media guests and inquire as to their attendance. This should also be viewed as an opportunity to strongly encourage their attendance and provide enough information to demonstrate the valuable information they will gain by attending the event.

Below are some suggested points to follow in making calls to invited media who have not already RSVPd to the event.

- *Hello my name is [NAME]. I'm calling from [ORGANIZATION NAME] to follow up on a media advisory you should have received inviting you to our brown bag [breakfast/luncheon].*
- *Is this an OK time for us to talk?* IF NOT, ask if there is a better time to call back.
- If they do not recall receiving the invitation, offer to re-fax it, confirm their fax number and ask if it is OK to call back after it is re-sent.
- If they did receive the information, ask if they are planning to attend.
- If they hesitate, you may wish to provide further event information and reasons their attendance would be valuable. This might include:
 - Access to clients, board members and organization leaders
 - New statistics or information to be presented
 - Opportunities to obtain important information on local issues of note
- Then, ask again if they are able to attend.
- If YES, thank them and tell them you will look forward to seeing them. Ask if there is anything in particular they would like to discuss.
- If NO, ask if they are interested in receiving invitations to similar events in the future. Other questions you might ask:
 - Is there another person from your organization who might wish to attend?
 - Would you still like to receive the information kit from the event?
 - Can I arrange another time for a one-on-one meeting?
- *By all means, thank them for their time.*



News Conferences

Description

A news conference is an event held to announce something of major significance. All media from your local market that generally cover your issues should be invited to attend.

A news conference should be a well-planned event, and may take several weeks to a month to fully prepare. A list identifying general tasks to conduct to prepare for a news conference follows this introduction.

News conferences should be held when timeliness is a factor and when you want to ensure that all media receive the same information at the same time. News conferences can also be useful if you have someone with limited time available for interviews, as this allows you to make that person available to large numbers of people simultaneously.

News conferences should not be held unless you believe the topic being announced is of enough importance to generate a significant number of media attendees who can be reasonably expected to provide coverage of the announcement.

The full topic of the news conference should not be discussed with any media representatives prior to the event. Instead, a media advisory that provides general information about what the media can expect to learn at the news conference should be distributed prior to the event.

A news conference is generally held in the morning. Mondays and Fridays are not ideal times for news conferences. Be aware of any key deadlines (i.e., the deadline of your major daily newspaper) when scheduling a news conference. For example, many radio news directors and reporters are not generally available before 10:30 a.m. In addition, many television reporters are not available before 10 a.m., and may need to return to the television station in time to produce a story on your news conference for the Noon newscast. Therefore, an ideal, but not essential, time to hold a news conference is Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 10:30 and 11 a.m.

A news conference generally will last 15 to 20 minutes, with time allowed following prepared remarks for questions and answers from attending media. One-on-one interviews with news conference speakers may be offered following the news conference to attending media. The news conference may be held at your organization's offices, or, if space is an issue, at an off-site location such as a hotel or other meeting facility.

Media attending a news conference will expect to receive a media kit, which may include a news release, biographies of participants, fact sheets and charts and graphs. If your news conference includes a formal presentation with overheads or slides, copies of those may also be provided to attending media. If desired, the media kit can be distributed to media unable to attend the event immediately following the news conference.



Task List

The following is a general list of tasks to be completed to plan and conduct a news conference.

- Identify media to be invited
- Identify topic to be addressed with attending media
- Identify and confirm (if off-site) location for news conference
- Identify news conference participants and speakers
- Develop a media advisory/invitation for the event (sample advisory to follow)
- Arrange for coffee, water, etc. to be available for attending media
- Identify and order (if necessary) any needed audio-visual equipment, such as a mult box (an electronic device that allows media to plug their recorders directly into the microphone for them to obtain recorded contents of news conference remarks), microphones, screens, podium, etc.
- Develop contents for and assemble media kits
 - News release (sample to follow)
 - Key news conference participants list, with biographies
 - Fact sheets
 - Supporting documentation, presentation materials, etc.
- Develop and distribute media advisory to media list
- Develop any necessary presentation materials, such as slides, overheads or charts
- Develop talking points for speakers
- Place follow up telephone calls to encourage attendance by media at news conference
- Develop sign-in sheet to monitor media attendance and to distribute media kits to attending media
- Hold news conference
- Forward news release and media kits to media unable to attend event
- Monitor for media coverage of news conference



Development of News Conference Materials

To ensure a successful news conference, you will want to be certain that you have prepared all the necessary materials. They will include the following:

Media Advisory

A media advisory contains the “who, what, where and when” information about the news conference. The advisory is intended to entice the media to attend the news conference to hear the major announcement. A sample media advisory follows.

News Release

The news release should capture all of the key points of the news conference announcement and should be written in a format similar to that of a news story. It is only distributed at or following the news conference – never beforehand. The news release should lead with the announcement that warranted the news conference and should include quotes from speakers at the news conference. It should also capture key background information to support the announcement and provide a contact for additional information. A sample news release format follows.

Talking Points

Talking points or written remarks should be prepared for those participants who will have a speaking role at the news conference. They should be typed double-spaced and in larger (14 point) type that is easy to read. You may choose to have copies of the remarks available for attending media. The talking points should include:

- Introduction of the speaker and any other participants
- Welcome to attending media and other guests
- Substance of the announcement and supporting information
- Thank you for attending
- Invitation to open the news conference to question and answer from the audience

Presentation Materials

To help deliver a comprehensive announcement, you may choose to utilize presentation materials. These should be large and easy to read for the audience, and may be produced by your organization or by an outside vendor. Available presentation materials include, but are not limited to:

- Large presentation boards on foam core or other similar material
- Overheads with a projector
- PowerPoint or similar computer-based presentation



Sample Media Advisory

Below is a suggested format to utilize when inviting media to attend a news conference. This should be distributed approximately one week prior to the news conference and again the day before the news conference. Follow up contact will likely be necessary to determine attendance.

WHO:	Name of your organization.
WHAT:	Description of event.
WHEN:	Day, date and time of your event.
WHERE:	Location of your event, including address, suite/floor number, parking information and any other pertinent details.
PROGRAM INFORMATION:	Include a general overview of what media can hope to learn by attending the news conference. Give them information about why the announcement is important, without revealing what the announcement actually is.
CONTACT PERSON:	Who will be the key contact for media interested in attending the news conference? Also, whom can they contact for interviews if they are unable to attend?



Sample News Release

The news release contains the central announcement of the news conference. It is distributed the day of the news conference to attending media, and it is also distributed to those media who were unable to attend the news conference. News releases should be typed double-spaced. A recommended format for the news release is below.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE

TITLE / HEADLINE

CITY -- Introductory paragraph. What is the specific announcement taking place at the news conference?

Follow with a quote from the organization's leadership or the central speaker at the news conference.

Add statistics or supporting information to the announcement, as available.

Include a second quote, if desired, from the same speaker or from an additional speaker at the news conference.

Close with any additional information.

(include at completion of release)

CONTACT: **Name of organization media contact**
 Telephone number where contact can be reached



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Editorial Board Meetings

Description

Daily newspapers – and some weekly newspapers – run **editorials** on the paper’s editorial or opinion page. Editorials are articles written by the newspaper that express the newspaper’s opinion on a variety of issues from a local or national level. Newspapers will frequently editorialize on such topics as legislation under consideration at a state or federal level, candidates for elected office, national and local policy issues and other similar subjects.

Members of the newspaper’s **editorial board** will meet to discuss what position or opinion the newspaper will take on a particular subject. The editorial board may include the editorial page editor, editorial writers, the editor and publisher of the newspaper and/or other members of the newspaper’s senior staff.

The editorial board may schedule meetings with members of the community or representatives of a particular “side” of key issues. These **editorial board meetings** offer an opportunity for people to provide those members of the paper’s editorial board with background on an issue, suggest reasoning for a particular point of view on that issue and offer opportunities for the editorial board to ask questions of those attending the meeting.

If you schedule a meeting with the editorial board, it is likely you are hoping to encourage the newspaper to take a position that is favorable to the position you have on the issue you are there to discuss. Below is an example that may help you understand why you might wish to schedule an editorial board meeting.

Example

Imagine that the Ohio General Assembly is considering legislation that would establish tougher laws for repeat offenders in domestic violence cases and make psychological counseling mandatory in those situations. This legislation is something that a local domestic violence shelter likely would be in favor of passing.

You contact the editor of your local newspaper to request an editorial board meeting to discuss the proposed legislation. At that meeting, you bring in the president of the shelter board, the executive director of the shelter and a local survivor of domestic violence. At the meeting, you present your case for why you believe the legislation is important for Ohio and the impact the legislation could have on a local level. You ask the newspaper to give its editorial support to the legislation. The result is that the newspaper writes an editorial in the Sunday paper that encourages local legislators to vote in favor of the proposed legislation.

Scheduling an Editorial Board Meeting

To request an editorial board meeting, contact your local newspaper's editorial page editor. You should call early in the day (between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. works well) and early in the week, being mindful of the newspaper's deadlines. You may get the editorial page editor or you may get an administrative assistant in the editorial department. He or she is probably in charge of scheduling the editorial board meeting. **Most editorial boards like to schedule meetings early in the week**, as they are busy later in the week preparing the weekend's editorials. Editorial boards are also busy in the one to two months prior to elections and will be less likely to schedule a meeting on a non-election issue, as their time is filled with meeting with candidates for elected office.

When you call, you should be direct in your request. A sample introduction based on the example above is offered below.

Hello, my name is NAME and I am calling from NAME OF ORGANIZATION. I am calling to request a meeting with your editorial board. I would like to bring in NAMES AND TITLES OF ATTENDEES to discuss Senate Bill 123, which would strengthen penalties for repeat offenders in domestic violence cases. We can provide you with a local perspective on this issue, as well as answer any questions you may have about the proposed legislation. Would you be willing to meet with us to discuss this issue, which is very important to CITY/COMMUNITY?

Three things can happen at this point: One, they can agree to the meeting and you proceed to scheduling the visit. Two, they can request more information from you on the topic. Or three, they can deny your meeting request.

- *If they agree to a meeting*, identify the date and time of the meeting. Ask how many people will attend the meeting, so that you can prepare the correct quantity of materials. Ask whom the appropriate contact will be if you have any additional questions or anything changes. Ask if there is anything (or anyone) in particular

they would like to have for the meeting. Confirm the meeting day and time, and thank them for their interest.

- *If they request more information*, you should have a package prepared that outlines the reasons for the meeting request and provides background and supporting materials on the issue to be discussed. You should include a cover letter that specifically requests the meeting, provides an overview of what is to be discussed and lists those who would be attending the meeting.
- *If they deny the meeting request*, you should ask if it is appropriate to submit written materials to the editorial page editor or editor. Confirm the contact information for that person. Then, prepare a package similar to the above outlined package that provides a full briefing on the issue and contact information for your organization’s leaders, as well as asking for the paper’s editorial support on that issue.

Attending the Editorial Board Meeting

There are some simple guidelines to follow when meeting with an editorial board.

- **Be on time.** Members of an editorial board are busy with the day-to-day responsibilities of the newspaper and should not be kept waiting.
- **Be prepared.** You may wish to consider holding a meeting prior to the editorial board meeting with those from your organization who will attend. Consider a “run-through” of your presentation to the editorial board. Make sure that any information you have is the most current available.
- **Anticipate questions.** Work with those attending to anticipate – and answer – questions that the editorial board might ask. Be prepared for tough questions, they may need to be convinced of your position.
- **Have the right information.** Prepare your editorial board packages in advance and have enough materials for everyone attending, including your own group, plus two extra copies. The newspaper may invite someone else to attend, for example, on a domestic violence issue, they might invite a human services or health reporter to sit in on the meeting. Include the following information in your packages:
 - Business cards and/or contact information for those attending
 - Fact sheets on the issue
 - Copies of any pertinent materials, such as legislation drafts
 - Background on your organization, as applicable



- **Make your case – succinctly.** Go to the meeting prepared to ask for the editorial board to take a position on the issue that supports your organization’s goal. Provide useful information, critical details and a top-line briefing. *Apply as much as you can to the local community*, particularly if the issue has or could have a significant positive or negative impact. You could have anywhere from 15 minutes to one hour to meet with the editorial board – use the time wisely.
- **Follow up.** After your meeting, write thank you notes to each person on the editorial board, thanking them for their time and reiterating your request for their editorial support. If they asked for any additional information or background on the issue, get it to them promptly.



Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor of your local newspaper(s) are an ideal way to communicate your position on issues of note, to inform the newspaper's readership about a specific event or activity of interest or to comment on a column, article or other news coverage that discusses domestic violence.

Newspapers cannot print every letter they receive from their readers. There are some general rules to follow when developing letters to the editor that may help ensure they are printed.

- **Letters should be in your own words.**
- **Letters should describe your connection to the issue at hand**, i.e., “as a domestic violence prevention provider, I was pleased to see that [NEWSPAPER] printed an **article on [TOPIC].**”
- **Letters should be timely if responding to an article.** If you are writing in response to something written in the newspaper, you should make every effort to get your letter to the newspaper within one week of the article's publication.
- **Limit your letters to no more than 300 words;** 250 is a good length to work with.
- **Sign your letters and include your city of residence and a daytime telephone number.** Most newspapers will call to confirm if they choose to run your letter and will not run a letter that does not include a signature and contact information.
- **Consider using technology.** Many newspapers now accept letters to the editor via *email* or via *facsimile transmission*. If your local newspaper has a web site, there may be a location on that site where you can send letters electronically or a listing of newspaper email addresses. Letters sent via email are easy for papers to publish because they do not have to be re-typed into the newspaper's computer system.

Topic Ideas

When writing your letter, you should try to have some sort of call-to-action for the reader. Some topics to consider:

1. Domestic Violence Awareness Month – time to take action.
2. If you are looking for a way to get involved in the community, donate time to your local domestic violence shelter.
3. Anyone can be a victim of family violence (it's not your fault, there's help available).
4. Family violence is a cycle.
5. If you know someone who is being abused, it's your responsibility to help.

Sample Letter

Below is a sample letter that might come from a shelter director.

To the Editor:

As a director of the local shelter for victims of family violence, I see women and children everyday who are victims of abuse. This month is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and I am asking everyone in our community to stand up and take action!

It's time we stop sitting by, watching our neighbors, friends, relatives and children suffering from abuse. Family violence is a crime – and it's our duty and responsibility to report problems to the proper people and to point the victims in the direction of help.

Our organization, ABC Shelter, is available as a resource for victims of domestic violence and their families. While our location is undisclosed, we can be reached 24 hours a day by calling 1-800-ABC-HELP.

Please help. Together we can stop the violence.

*Angie Smith
Director
ABC Shelter*



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Guest Columns

Similar to a letter to the editor, guest columns, which are also called opinion columns or op-ed columns, offer an opportunity to provide your opinion to your local newspaper in the form of a written column. You can use this type of column to communicate your position on specific issues in the news or to encourage the newspaper's readership to better understand issues your organization is involved with, such as domestic violence prevention. These guest columns appear on the newspaper's opinion or editorial page.

Newspapers receive many guest columns from local and national writers. All will not be published. Many papers are committed to running a certain number of columns by nationally syndicated columnists – decreasing the availability of space for local columns.

There are some general rules to follow when developing and submitting guest columns that may help ensure they are printed.

- **When possible, the columns should relate to something happening in the news**, either on a national or local level. For example, a column submitted during National Domestic Violence Month might be more likely to be published, or a column that is submitted following a newspaper's coverage of a local domestic violence case.
- **Localize your column**, whenever possible, to make it more appealing to the newspaper's readership. Include local examples, anecdotes or statistics.
- **Letters should be submitted to the opinion page, op-ed page or editor of the newspaper.** You can get the appropriate contact by calling the newspaper or visiting the paper's web site.
- **Include a brief cover letter with your column submission** that outlines why the paper should consider running the column and offers contact information, including city of residence and daytime phone number, for the writer.
- **Limit your column to no more than 700 words;** 600-700 is a good range for a guest column.
- **Consider including a black and white photo of the author with the column for submission.** A "head shot" (head and shoulders only) photo is generally

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preferred. Some newspapers do not need photos, monitor your local paper or call and ask if you are uncertain as to their photo policy.

- **Type the columns in double-spaced type.**
- Should the newspaper decide to run your column, they may request that you **submit the column via email**, so that they do not have to re-type it.

Some topics you might write a guest column about include:

- There have been several family violence incidents in the local area lately. The column might include a list of ways to recognize signs of abuse in co-workers, friends and neighbors.
- A high-profile family violence case is pending in local courts. The column might include references to similar cases, or a discussion of victim protections while cases are pending.
- National Domestic Violence Awareness Month: A good time to look at the impact of family violence, both on the victim and the community. You might approach your local paper about allowing you to do a month-long series on the issue.



Employer Outreach & Materials

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Ideas for Partnership

As you begin outreach in your community, you may have the opportunity to leverage relationships with local businesses in order to obtain in-kind donations. Listed below are some ideas for ways you can partner with local businesses outside of regular monetary donations. We hope these ideas will spark more ideas for your organization.

1. Ask a business partner to host a volunteer recognition or other luncheon/dinner event. Be sure to publicize this event with local media using the media materials provided in the previous pages.
2. Ask a local business to donate a portion of their advertising space in your local paper to your organization. You can use this space to advertise your events, services and promote awareness of family violence issues.
3. Ask a local print business to donate the cost of printing materials – these materials might include brochures or items from this toolkit. Most printers will donate the printing if they are able to include their logo on the printed materials somewhere prominent.
4. Partner with a local restaurant to provide the food and catering for your organization's events and programs.
5. Work with a local drugstore or beauty supply (stores that sell products to hairdressers). When their product is close to the expiration date, many will simply throw it away. They might be willing to donate the product to your shelter or organization, rather than throwing it out.



Model Employer Outreach Materials



Domestic violence doesn't stay at home when a victim goes to work. Look around your office. The odds are overwhelming that someone in your organization is a victim of domestic violence. And it's not confined only to physical and sexual violence – psychological abuse destroys self-confidence and self-esteem as well.

It also extends beyond the office and beyond the home, affecting our community, our children and our world. Consider the following:

- Domestic violence is a leading cause of injury to women in the United States.
- It crosses all ethnic groups and income levels with victims as likely to be found in boardrooms as boarding houses.
- More than 175,000 workdays each year are lost due to domestic violence between partners.
- Domestic violence results in hundreds of millions of dollars in added health care benefits, much of which is paid for by employer-provided health benefits.

You can make a difference. There is one place where domestic violence victims spend eight hours a day away from their abusers – the workplace. You can help make your business a safe haven for them by actively addressing the issue of domestic violence within your own employee base. Begin by creating guidelines, procedures and awareness programs to help co-workers recognize the signs of abuse.

To support you in that effort, we are pleased to provide you with the enclosed call to action employer kit. These model materials were developed by The Limited, Inc. and Intimate Brands, Inc. and are actively in use at those companies today. The Limited, Inc. and Intimate Brands, Inc. are recognized nationally and statewide for their leadership, philanthropy and advocacy on domestic violence issues. We encourage you to use their materials and resources as a starting point.

For more information about how your business can break the cycle of violence, call the Ohio Family Violence Prevention Center (1-888-448-4842) or the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-7233).

Together we can make every workplace a safe workplace.

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