



NMVVC

National Mass Violence Center

Providing Resources to Victims,
Survivors, & Those Who Serve Them

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Media Guidelines for Homicide Family Survivors

If you are a survivor of a loved one who was murdered in a mass violence incident (MVI), there are important issues for you to consider and address if you wish to speak to the news media. A victim service provider (VSP) can help you review these guidelines to help you prepare:

- ⇒ **Portrayal of your loved one.** How do you want your loved one to be remembered? It's important to depict exactly who the homicide victim was in order to convey what is missing in your life, and your devastating sense of grief and loss. Here are some thoughts:
 - The victim's role as a grandparent, parent, sibling, son, daughter, etc. and what he or she meant to your family
 - Personal and professional accomplishments across the span of his or her lifetime
 - What he or she enjoyed doing, i.e., any hobbies, volunteer activities, faith affiliations, etc.
 - His or her favorite music, food, quotation or saying, etc.
 - Any personal anecdotes from family members and friends about the victim that humanize him or her, and let people know exactly what was lost as a result of this senseless crime
- ⇒ **Provide visuals.** Do you have favorite photographic options (for print media), for example, a simple photograph of the homicide victim alone, along with visuals that show the person with other family members, engaged in favorite activities, at work, etc.? For broadcast media, you can help carefully curate a brief video that documents the victim's life, likes, and accomplishments, or share a few snapshots that together paint a visual portrait.
- ⇒ **Access to others.** The media may want to speak to other family members, professional colleagues, and friends who knew and loved the homicide victim. Your support person or Victim Service Professional (VSP) can help you identify and provide contact information for such persons to the media.
- ⇒ **Issues with young people.** For younger homicide victims, information about the child's personality and favorite activities, subjects he or she enjoyed in school, and hobbies are all important to convey. Your support person or VSP can also help you identify a favorite teacher, coach, or mentor who can also talk about the child.
- ⇒ **Decisions about media coverage of wakes, funerals or memorial events.** It is up to you to decide if you want media coverage of these important and highly personal events. A VSP can make your wishes clear to the news media, and help obtain security to protect the privacy of you and your loved ones, as needed and upon request.

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