**Media coverage of domestic violence**

**DOs & DON'Ts for reporters**

- **KNOW THE FACTS**
  Anyone can experience domestic violence, and its effects often extend beyond physical injury.

- **COVER ALL PARTIES**
  Someone was harmed and someone caused harm. Clearly acknowledge the primary aggressor in the situation.

- **SEEK EXPERT COMMENT**
  Reports from law enforcement are one perspective. Local domestic violence advocates can provide additional context.

- **SHARE RESOURCES**
  Always include contact info for local crisis hotlines and shelters at the end of each story.

- **SENSATIONALIZE**
  Domestic violence can be extremely traumatic. Embellishing doesn't serve the facts or the public.

- **BLAME ANGER OR DRUGS**
  Abusers seek to maintain power and control over their victims. Drugs or poor anger management skills DO NOT excuse domestic violence.

- **MISLABEL**
  Calling it a "disturbance," "dispute," or "relationship problem" minimizes the danger and its effects on victims.

- **HARASS THE VICTIM'S FAMILY**
  Especially in homicides, give respect for the bereaved. If you must interview someone, ask for a willing family spokesperson.

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OCADV is eager to work with journalists and local advocacy programs to improve news media coverage of domestic violence cases. Contact us with any questions or requests.

For sources and more information, visit [ocadsv.org/dvmediacoverage](http://ocadsv.org/dvmediacoverage). Revised November 27, 2017