

Victim Tips for Media Interviews

- **Relax and be yourself.** Your level of personal comfort will improve your interview experience.
- **Be sincere and honest.** Your personal credibility is your most important asset!
- **Know what you want to say.** Be prepared with two or three key points *you* want to make and find a way to make them early in the interview. For example: “The one thing I really want to say is. . .,” or “My most important message is. . .” Return to those messages and repeat them in different forms whenever you can.
- **Speak slowly and clearly.** Think about the question, then think about your answer.
- **Keep your answers brief and succinct.** You can follow a brief answer with more details, but make sure the most important information is conveyed first, simply and to the point. Consider preparing pithy quotes in advance.
- **Once you make your point, stop talking.** Don’t worry about silence. It is not your job to fill it. Talking beyond your stopping point makes it harder to edit your quotes. It is also when many people say things they wish they hadn’t.
- **Send your messages.** You can reinforce your key points by repeating them.
- **Listen to the entire question before answering it.** Take the time needed to formulate your response. In broadcast interviews, overlapping your answer with the interviewer’s question can make it difficult for editors.
- **Make sure you know what is being asked.** If you don’t understand a question, ask for clarification.
- **Refuse politely.** If an interviewer’s question makes you feel uncomfortable, simply say, “I’m not comfortable answering that question.”
- **Don’t overextend.** If you don’t know the answer to a question, simply say so. If you feel you can’t respond, give a brief reason, such as, “I’ll be able to answer that once the jury reaches its verdict.”
- **Never say, “No comment.”** You can say, “I’m unable to answer that question at this time” or “I don’t have enough information to fully address your question.”
- **Avoid going “off the record.”** Simply assume that *everything* you say is “on the record” and speak accordingly.
- **Don’t interrupt the interviewer or other guests.** Likewise, if you feel you are being interrupted, you can say, “If it’s okay, I’d like to finish what I was saying.”
- **Speak plainly.** Avoid any jargon or acronyms that may be confusing to readers, listeners, or viewers.
- **Avoid distractions.** Do not use hand gestures that may block your face or expressions that detract from the content of the interview. Don’t wear jangly or shiny jewelry to broadcast interviews **or**

anything else that might make noise that microphones might pick up. Avoid tapping your fingers or your feet.

- ***Correct errors or misperceptions.*** If inaccurate information is presented in the course of an interview, present the facts to correct it in a positive manner.
- ***Avoid fatigue.*** If you need to take a break (except during live interviews), ask for one.
- ***Don't feel guilty about being human.*** Always remember that what happened to you was bad and is possibly distressing to you. It's okay to show emotions during an interview.
- ***Emphasize your story.*** Remember that you are speaking for *yourself*. It's important to avoid making generalizations that appear to represent *all* victims.