

## **The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence: Tips for Journalists Covering Domestic Violence**

- Place the crime in the context of domestic violence.
- Acknowledge that domestic violence is not a private matter.
- Look into prior history of domestic violence and let the story evolve.
- Convey that domestic violence is a pattern of behavior that often escalates when a victim is trying to leave or has left the relationship.
- Illustrate the warning signs of an abusive relationship.
- When interviewing a domestic violence survivor, consider her safety and confidentiality needs.
- Avoid calling domestic violence a “relationship problem.”
- Do not focus on the victim’s behavior or use victim-blaming language.
- Do not assume that some cultures or classes are violent, and others are not.
- Avoid using sources emotionally connected to the abuser or sources that do not have significant information about the crime or those involved.
- Avoid treating domestic violence crimes as an inexplicable tragedy, beyond the reach of community action.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Kelly Starr, Revised 2006, *Covering Domestic Violence: A Guide for Journalists and Other Media Professionals*, Seattle, WA: Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.