Media Guide
A Guide for Media Professionals Reporting on Domestic Violence

Introduction
Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive and controlling behavior that can include physical, emotional, sexual, and/or financial abuse. In many cases, which can include child or elder abuse, it is currently experienced by millions of people. Survivors are more likely to experience domestic violence in the following situations:

1. The general public
2. The work environment
3. The community
4. The school environment
5. The family
6. The hospital environment
7. The legal system
8. The police department

When reporting on domestic violence, please be careful to protect any children involved in the situation. You can do so by using the following guidelines:

1. Avoid the phrase "domestic dispute".
2. Use the term "abuse" instead of "alleged abuse".
3. Avoid describing the victim's past behavior as relevant.

What is Domestic Violence?
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Enhance Reader Understanding the Do's

1. Direct quote: "Survivors are the experts on their family, doctors, or other community supports including community based intervention, with overreliance on the criminal legal system to address domestic violence organizations.

2. Active voice: "Domestic violence can be a difficult issue to investigate and report on. This media guide was created to assist journalists in covering stories involving domestic violence in a more expansive, engaged, and empowering way.

3. Display Resources: "http://crimeinco.cbi.state.co.us/cic2k16/supplemental_reports/domestic.php"

4. Interviewing Survivors: "Is victim's past behavior really relevant?"

Pitfalls, the Do Not's

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Interviewing Survivors

1. Relate the interviewee's story to their own experience.
2. Avoid asking questions about the abuse.
3. Encourage the interviewee to tell their story in their own words.

4. Avoid asking questions that could be interpreted as accusatory.

Additional Considerations:
When reporting on domestic violence, it is important to remember that survivors are the experts on their experiences. Use the following guidelines when interviewing survivors:

1. Ask the interviewee about their values and beliefs.
2. Ask the interviewee about their opinions on the legal system.
3. Ask the interviewee about their hopes and dreams.

For more information, contact COADV at 303-442-6639 or visit your community's local DV advocacy organization: http://coads.org/466/html/programs-by-county/