

Media Terminology

- **Backgrounders** – In-depth explanations of an issue that can be used to bring a reporter, who is completely new to an issue, up to speed.
- **Calendar Announcement** – A short, one-page notification of an event that is of interest to the public. A calendar announcement is intended to air or to be published.
- **Edit Memo** – A short memorandum addressed to an editorial page editor or member of an editorial board asking her or him to devote space to an issue. A good edit memo contains several well-written paragraphs that can be lifted and used in an editorial. You can use an edit memo to direct editorial writers to the issues. You may want to send an edit memo at the beginning of October to alert editorial page editors or editorial board members to DVAM and urge them to editorialize in favor of all people making it their business to help stop domestic violence. It's a good idea to make suggestions for actions people can take.
- **Fact Sheet** – A one-page information sheet that contains statistics or other data.
- **Letter-to-the-Editor** – A letter from a newspaper reader that responds to reports or editorials with a confirming or opposing point of view, often expanding on a point made in the original article. Letters-to-the-editor should be brief – no more than a page, four or five very short paragraphs – signed by the program director, another representative or a survivor.
- **Media Advisory or Media Alert** – A one-page dated announcement of an upcoming event such as a press opportunity or photo opportunity. It includes a contact name and telephone number that reporters can call for more information and is sent to assignment editors, reporters, editors and producers.
- **News Conference** – An event staged exclusively for the press. One or more spokespeople (but not more than four) read prepared statements and answer reporters' questions. You should call a news conference only if you have something newsworthy, timely and extremely important to announce. Announcing that October is DVAM will not be enough to draw reporters to a news conference. A proclamation by the mayor, in conjunction with DVAM may be a good draw if the mayor speaks at the news conference.
- **News Release** – A two to four page report of a newsworthy event. It is written as an article; portions of good news releases often appear in print. A news release must contain a contact to call for further information, a headline, a first or lead sentence that grabs the reader, a quote from a spokesperson and additional background information. You should put out a news release in conjunction with the events or activities you hold for DVAM. The news release is distributed at the time of the event, either by mailing, faxing, emailing or handing it out.
- **Op/Ed Piece** – A 500 to 700 word signed guest editorial that is submitted to newspapers. It should emphasize the writer's opinion or experience and be of interest to the general public. An op/ed on DVAM could talk about the pervasiveness of domestic violence and the importance of every person taking it upon herself or himself to take action to help prevent abuse.

- **Pitch Letter** – A personalized note that specifically urges a particular reporter to cover an event or an issue. Pitch letters often describe a particularly newsworthy aspect of the event.
- **Photo Opportunity** – A press opportunity that has a particularly good visual component, worthy of space in a newspaper or magazine.
- **Public Service Announcement (PSA, Public Service Spot)** – A brief announcement made on behalf of a nonprofit organization on both radio and television. Like commercials, PSAs are limited to specific lengths. They must be non-political and of wide interest and benefit to the public. October may be a prime month for media outlets to accept and run PSAs.
- **Pre-Interview** – A telephone conversation with a producer at a talk show. These are used to be certain that the guest is intelligent, articulate, well-versed in the issues, quick on her or his feet and interesting to hear. A pre-interview requires the same serious preparation as the interview itself.
- **Press Briefing** – An informal, by-invitation-only meeting at which advocates present reports, backgrounds and information. Press briefings often take place over breakfast and usually involve one to three briefers and up to twelve reporters. Ordinarily, you would hold a briefing to bring reporters up to speed on facts relating to an incident or a report that might be important to the program and the community. Fact sheets and other background materials should be distributed. DVAM might be a good opportunity to educate key reporters in your area about the pervasiveness of domestic violence in your city and nationwide.
- **Press Kits** – Sets of information for the media, usually in a pocket folder, distributed at news conferences, press briefings or in response to requests for information. Press kits contain news releases, statements, backgrounders, fact sheets and materials that are not designed specifically for the media (like newsletters or brochures). As you work to publicize your DVAM events and activities with the media, you will want to have press kits about your program to give to reporters.
- **Press Opportunity** – An event that is not planned for the media, but which reporters may attend. Rallies, marches, candlelight vigils, fund-raisers, public speeches or appearances, awards ceremonies and issue forums are press opportunities.
- **Statements** – Brief (one page or less) prepared remarks of a spokesperson. Statements should be dated and include a contact name and phone number. If you hold a news conference, a rally or any other public event, you will want statements for all the speakers to distribute to the press. Statements can also be used to respond quickly to a breaking story (such as a highly publicized incident of abuse). They must be prepared quickly and be less than one page. Dictate, deliver or fax a statement within an hour or two of an event. Statements MUST BE quotable. Good reporters often follow up a statement with a question, but having a statement helps the reporter insert commentary into the story immediately.