

Opinion-Editorial

Newspaper editorial pages — both in print and online — are highly popular among readers. Opinion-editorials (op-eds) are longer than letters to the editor and afford the opportunity to delve more deeply into issues. An op-ed is your chance to influence opinions, affect policy, and highlight the work you or your organization is doing to support crime victims' rights. One way to develop an op-ed is to research local crime coverage and important issues in your community. For example, does your community offer services for victims of human trafficking? How would a partnership between law enforcement and victim service agencies benefit your community? Use or adapt the sample op-ed on the following page or craft your own to highlight an issue local to your community.

Five Elements of an Attention-Grabbing Op-Ed

- Be persuasive. Include the latest research and structure a logical argument or rationale.
- Be confident. You are the expert in this field.
- Stay up to date on related events and the cultural conversations about them.
- Use plain language that a wide audience can understand.
- Keep your submission to 800 words or less.



**Options, services
and hope
for crime survivors.**

Sample Op-Ed (455 words)

Here's a simple truth: You may not know how to support a friend, family member, colleague, or acquaintance if they tell you about a crime committed against them.

Each year, millions of Americans are victims of crimes. In 2022 alone, there were 6.6 million violent victimizations against persons age 12 or older and 13.4 million property crimes, [according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics](#).

[Insert any local statistics here.]

But that's far from the full picture. Many survivors don't immediately — or sometimes ever — tell what happened to them. The reasons are incredibly personal. They may perceive that sharing what happened to them will only make things worse — especially in situations in which there is an ongoing threat of physical, psychological, or financial harm. This can be an especially powerful fear if the perpetrator of the crime is a family member, friend, intimate partner, boss, religious leader, or other person who has a profound impact on the person's daily life. Survivors may fear that they won't be taken seriously or that they won't get the help they need, a feeling that can be exacerbated by cultural or language barriers or mistrust of the criminal justice system. They may worry about reprisal for reporting their victimization, either from the individual harming them or the authorities.

When a survivor does reach out, we should listen, empathize, and be prepared to help. With whom they share, how, how much, and when is entirely up to them. We can bear witness when a survivor does share.

Now ask yourself: Are you prepared to help a crime survivor? If not, how will you become prepared? And if so, how will you help educate others in your community about how to be ready?

[Insert relevant local or regional resources.]

The theme of this year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week is just that: "How would *you* help? Options, services, and hope for crime survivors." [Organization name] is proud to join others around the country from April 21-27 in a commitment to promoting awareness of support, services, and hope for survivors of crime in this community and across the United States.

[Insert a sentence, if relevant, about any local initiative your organization is hosting or promoting in conjunction with NCVRW.]

This year's observance is not just a time to recognize the vital work of professionals and volunteers who help victims and to raise awareness of victims' rights and services, it's a challenge to individuals and services across our community to create safe environments for crime survivors. It's a way to remind survivors that they're not alone. And it's a call to action that any of us could be the one who can provide potentially life-saving hope to someone who needs it.

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