

Tips for Bias Crime Victims Interacting with the Media

You may have media reporters reach out to you in the aftermath of a hate crime or bias incident wanting to obtain your statement for their report. You may even want to personally post information online or on your own social media. The power of your personal story can contribute to increased awareness, understanding, education, and systems or legislative changes. You may also lose privacy or open up exposure for yourself or others in ways you did not intend.

Here are some tips for engaging with the media:

- ☐ What you say to the media is public and permanent.
- ☐ Consider talking to an attorney for legal guidance in advance.
- ☐ Consider talking to an advocate from Oregon's statewide [Bias Response Hotline](#) to safety plan about speaking publicly in advance.
- ☐ You can appoint a spokesperson to speak on your behalf if you do not want direct contact with the media. This can include family member, friend, attorney, religious leader, or victim advocate.
- ☐ Verify who you're talking to. Ask if you can call the news station to verify their affiliation. Ask to see the reporter's credentials.
- ☐ Ask the reporter what the intent of their story is in advance of agreeing to meet with them.
- ☐ Bring a trusted friend to act as a witness and/or take notes during your conversation/statement.
- ☐ Ask permission to record the conversation yourself. The reporter will likely ask you the same.
- ☐ Ask if it's possible to remain anonymous.
- ☐ If you choose to share your name, spell it for the reporter, and specify your pronouns.
- ☐ Set boundaries. You can say certain pieces of your statement are off the record.

- ☐ Consider unintended consequences. Will media coverage out you before you're ready to be out? Or will your children, your school, or your employer be impacted by your statement?
- ☐ Write out your main talking points in advance.
- ☐ Be mindful that your statement may result in a tv story, newspaper story, radio story, online story with audio/video/text, and more.
- ☐ Be aware that a blogger, influencer, podcaster, or another person with no journalism education or training may cut clips from your statement or otherwise put a spin on your experience and statement, and may have a large audience online. Even another news agency you may not support/agree with may cut their own story from your original statement.
- ☐ Be aware that the slightest inconsistency in your statement may hurt a future a criminal or civil legal case.
- ☐ Designate a point of contact for all follow-up inquiries/interviews.
- ☐ Remember: As a victim of crime, you are not required to give interviews or speak to the media. Understand that you are entitled to seek privacy if you wish.
- ☐ If you feel harassed by reporters, you can file a complaint with their employers or police.