

Domestic Violence: Quick Reference Guide for Media Coverage

TIPS FOR ACCURATELY COVERING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRIMES ●

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 the safety and confidentiality needs of the interviewee.

WHAT TO AVOID WHEN COVERING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRIMES ●

Avoid calling domestic violence a “relationship problem.”

Do not focus on the victim’s behavior or use victim-blaming language.

Do not assume 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.

Information and Resources ●

Iowa Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-942-0333 (voice/TDD)

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence: www.icadv.org

The full guide can be found at http://www.idph.state.ia.us/bh/domestic_abuse_review.asp