

BLOGS

Consider sharing more in-depth messages with your community online through a blog, such as [WordPress](#) and [Blogger](#). Post as frequently as you wish, with a goal of at least once a month. Be sure to provide a link to your blog on your Facebook, Twitter, and other social media pages.

Steps to an Engaging Blog Post

- Target your audience by using an appropriate reading level and relevant content.
- Check your facts—use only statistics that come from reliable sources, and cite them.
- State your main points in your introduction and again in the conclusion.
- Limit your post to no more than 750 words.
- Time the release of your blog post to coincide with events and current news.

Ideas for Blog Posts

- Information for crime victims, such as crime victim compensation or victims' rights.
- Details about an upcoming event or a recap following an event.
- Awareness days, weeks, and months.
- Suggestions for self-care.
- Personal stories including suggestions for self-care and how victims used local resources to assist in their recovery.
- Lists of important resources and services.
- Relevant interviews with important local officials or executives in the organization.



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Sample Blog Post

Advocacy as a Path to Justice

Seeking justice in court is one way for victims of crime to make progress toward healing. Some victims decide that the path of advocacy is also a way forward in the aftermath of crime.

The President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, established in 1982, was a watershed moment for crime victims in the United States. The recommendations of this task force led directly to the passage of the Victims of Crime Act in 1984, an unprecedented recognition that crime victims' rights must be formally codified and protected. This landmark achievement of the victims' rights movement would not have been possible without years' of work by advocates who transformed their own painful experiences into a force for legal and legislative change.

For these victims and their families, the stories of previous generations in the crime victims' rights movement are a powerful testament to the use of advocacy as a means for achieving healing and justice by changing the justice system. Across the decades, these advocates have contributed to the passage of crucial federal and state laws that protect crime victims.

One of the most prominent examples of early justice through advocacy is the family of Matthew Shepard, an openly gay man attending the University of Wyoming. On October 7, 1998, Shepard met two men in a bar. After leaving with them, he was found brutally tortured, maimed, and murdered. It was suspected, due to his injuries, that his murder was a hate crime based on his sexual orientation. His family rallied through their pain to advocate for protections for the LGBTQ community. Their efforts resulted in the Matthew Shepard Act. The law provides monetary and educational resources to law enforcement agencies for the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes. It also makes it illegal to attempt or cause harm, injury, or death to individuals under one of six protected classes, including sexual orientation.

We continue to find examples of hope today, through the pioneering advocacy work of victims. Brenda Tracy, a sexual assault survivor, has spent years raising awareness of sexual assault and helping pass laws to support victims of those crimes. In 1998, Brenda was sexually assaulted by four men, two of whom were college football players at Oregon State University. Finding the courage to tell her story publicly in 2014, Brenda began speaking at colleges and universities in Oregon and across the Nation. Her words have made people in the higher education community understand the severe physical, psychological, and emotional impact of sexual assault. She has also worked closely with Oregon legislators to expand victims' rights, extend the state's statute of limitations for prosecuting sexual assault crimes, and provide protection and resources for campus sexual assault victims.

Similarly, Shari Kastein, a domestic violence victim, has worked tirelessly as an advocate both to change victim services and to increase them. In 2013, Shari joined the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation and developed the Western Iowa Survivors of Homicide Unit. This unit specializes in providing compassionate care and services to families and friends of those who have been murdered or seriously injured by crime. In 2015, she helped create a statewide domestic violence helpline that fields calls from sexual assault victims, human trafficking victims, and homicide survivors. Her extraordinary work has helped countless women, men, and children maintain hope in the midst of their victimization.



Because of trailblazers like the Shepards, Brenda Tracy, and Shari Kastein, each year the victims' rights movement comes one step closer to ensuring that all victims of crime can seek justice, know their rights, and feel a sense of hope for the future. Their work, which is truly justice through advocacy, has allowed victims and communities to find hope and healing in the wake of trauma. Advocacy gives victims a voice in shaping their future—and it's a future that you can help create, by elevating the voices of crime victims in your own community.

If you would like to learn more about advocacy by and for victims of crime, *[link to local resources from your organization and others]*.



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