



ZERO

TOLERANCE

SUBMISSION FROM ZERO TOLERANCE **IMPRESS Code Review: Call for Evidence**

About Zero Tolerance

Zero Tolerance is a Scottish charity working to end men's violence against women (VAW) by promoting gender equality and challenging attitudes that normalise violence and abuse. Our work with the media supports journalists and content creators to contribute to the prevention of violence against women.

We provide:

- detailed guidance on reporting
- free selection of stock images
- latest statistics
- a current list of expert contacts
- phone support for Scottish reporters and content producers

We conduct:

- frequent media monitoring to investigate current trends
- The Write to End Violence Against Women Awards and Bursary in partnership with women's and equalities organisations and the Daily Record

Introduction

The media has a significant role to play in the prevalence of violence against women, as the information it provides can either challenge or enforce harmful attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes. We welcome the opportunity to offer our expertise and guidance to support the media to provide the accurate and responsible reporting that is so essential to the prevention of violence against women.

Evidence

The evidence base regarding violence against women and the role of the media is limited due to inadequate investment and consideration for this area of work, therefore we will be including evidence published prior to January 2017 as a part of this response.

Recommendations

Ultimately, we would like to see the introduction of a new clause in the IMPRESS Standards Code and Guidance dedicated to reporting on violence against women. In response to this particular call for evidence, we strongly recommend that existing clauses are updated to reflect current knowledge and understanding of violence against women.

Clause (example of possible wording):

Stories should not perpetuate harmful attitudes that condone and excuse violence against women.

Guidance should include the following points:

1. Reporting should acknowledge gender inequality as the root cause of violence against women and use statistics to put the story in a wider social context.
2. Reporting should never excuse, justify or perpetuate myths about violence against women.
3. Reporting must portray perpetrators of violence accurately.
4. Reporting should never include unnecessary detail of crimes.
5. Reporting should not name victims of violence against women, even in cases where doing so would not be prohibited by law.
6. Reporting should never imply in any way that the victim was even partially to blame.
7. Reporting should never objectify women.
8. Reporting of commercial sexual exploitation, such as web cams, prostitution or pornography, should include information about the associated dangers and harms to the individual.
9. The images used to illustrate articles dealing with violence against women should not objectify or victimise women, photos, videos and audio should be utilized with skepticism and caution.
10. Reporting should treat all cases of violence against women with seriousness, regardless of who the victim is.
11. Reporting should never sensationalize a victim's gender identity.
12. Reporting should never stigmatize any ethnic group or religion.
13. Reporting should incorporate quotations from a range of sources, including from experts such as local and national organisations working to end violence against women.
14. Comments under articles about violence against women should be turned off or stringently moderated.
15. All reporting featuring violence against women should include information about at least one appropriate helpline.

Why this issue is important

Violence against women is a continuum including domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, femicide, stalking and harassment, female genital mutilation, harmful traditional practices (so-called 'honour' crimes), image-based abuse (so called 'revenge porn'), and commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution and sex trafficking.

Violence against women continues to be a hugely prevalent and complex social problem, and the media has a direct responsibility for shaping public attitudes towards it.

In the UK, 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse and 1 in 5 sexual assault during her lifetime. ¹ Globally, this rises to 1 in 3, or 35%, of women will experience physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence.²

Gender inequality is both cause and consequence of violence against women, and entrenched gender stereotypes facilitate this inequality and violence. Although there is some good reporting on violence against women, a large proportion of current reporting perpetuates myths and stereotypes and contributes to attitudes that condone and excuse violence. Tolerance of violence against women remains very high in our society and outdated misconceptions are still very much present in public discourse.

We acknowledge that some relevant guidance already exists in different parts of the IMPRESS Standards Code and accompanied guidance. We also recognise that journalists and media outlets are under increasing pressures in an era where budgets at newsdesks are tight. However, the complexity of the issue, along with the severe short and long-term consequences of poor reporting, mean that a more comprehensive regulatory framework is required to ensure that the media are able to provide accurate information that contributes to preventing, rather than exacerbating, violence against women.

Impact of the media

A 2016 review of media representations of violence against women found that 'There is clear link between media reporting and attitudes and beliefs in relation to violence against women, with audiences' emotional responses and attributions of responsibility affected by how the media frames news. ³

The way the media frames violence against women can also influence audiences' views on criminal justice responses.³ Relatedly, a general over-reliance on criminal justice sources for information encourages the belief that the only response to violence against women is legal, absolving wider society from tackling its key causes. ⁴ A 2018 study found that the media can encourage justification of violence against women by focusing on incorrect 'reasons' or 'causes' for it.⁵

¹ <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2019/03/07/violence-against-women-and-girls-and-male-position-factsheets/>

² <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

³ Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited (2016) *Media representations of violence against women and their children: Final report* <http://anrows.org.au/publications/horizons-0/media-representations> p2.

⁴ Ferrand Bullock, C. (2007) 'Framing Domestic Violence Fatalities: Coverage by Utah Newspapers' *Women's Studies in Communication* Vol. 30(1):34-63

⁵ Addressing the Social and Cultural Norms That Underlie the Acceptance of Violence <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK493719/>

Our media monitoring data shows that many journalists, editors and media producers continue to resort to harmful stereotypes when reporting on incidences of violence. Considering the link between media reporting and public attitudes, this type of reporting contributes to a culture where violence against women continues to be normalised and accepted.

1. Journalism online and violence against women	
RECOMMENDATIONS	EVIDENCE
Journalists and content creators should treat photos, videos and audio with skepticism and caution.	<p>In recent years, we've been observing the rapid development of new ways that technology is used by perpetrators to commit violence ⁶. A 2019 Adult Online Hate, Harassment and Abuse: A rapid evidence assessment ⁷ from the UK lists six types of image-based sexual violence, defining this type of abuse as "sexual photoshopping."</p> <p>A 2019 report ⁸ found that 96 percent of deepfake videos online were pornographic, and exclusively targeted women. Given that deepfakes can easily be mistaken for real video footage, the potential damage of deepfakes is immense. The gendered aspect of deepfakes, especially when sexual in nature, is not to be underestimated.</p> <p>Research has also shown that the vast majority of victims of image-based abuse are women ⁹ and indicates that men are more likely than women to perpetrate image-based abuse. ¹⁰</p> <p>Multimedia should be challenged more frequently in online journalism as the usage of deepfakes and the prevalence of image-based abuse continue to grow.</p>
Comments under articles about VAW should be turned off or stringently moderated.	<p>Research shows that many people hold outdated views on violence against women. Findings from the Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2020 were worrying, exposing that underlying attitudes remain largely unchanged: "There were no significant differences between 2014 and 2019 in views on the wrongness of either physical or verbal abuse, or most of the coercive control scenarios..."¹¹</p> <p>From our own work, this finding is reflected in the comments left by members of the public under articles about violence against women published online and on social media.</p> <p>We see victim-blaming comments very frequently. For example, on a recent article about actress Evan Rachel Wood, who was abused by Marilyn Manson, someone had commented: "Well, look at him. He's a freak, what did she expect?" This comment perpetuates the myth that an abuser can be identified by their appearance.</p>

⁶ <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/deepfakes-and-cheap-fakes-the-biggest-threat-is-not-what-you-think-43046> . <https://www.wiisglobal.org/deepfakes-as-a-security-issue-why-gender-matters/> . <https://datajournalism.com/read/handbook/verification-3/investigating-actors-content/6-how-to-think-about-deepfakes-and-emerging-manipulation-technologie>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-online-hate-harassment-and-abuse-a-rapid-evidence-assessment>

⁸ https://regmedia.co.uk/2019/10/08/deepfake_report.pdf

⁹ Also referred to as 'revenge porn' which is an incorrect term to use. Here is why: <https://www.genderit.org/articles/5-important-reasons-why-we-should-not-call-it-revenge-porn>

¹⁰ https://regmedia.co.uk/2019/10/08/deepfake_report.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-attitudes-survey-2019-attitudes-violence-against-women-scotland/pages/8/>

Comments that question why someone stayed in a relationship with an abuser are also very common. These types of comments spread misinformation, blame victims rather than perpetrators for abuse, and deter other victims from coming forward and seeking help.

2. Discrimination and violence against women

RECOMMENDATIONS

Reporting should treat all cases of VAW with seriousness, regardless of who the victim is. Trans-women, women in prostitution and other marginalised women are as equally deserving of accurate and responsible reporting as any other women.

EVIDENCE

We are aware of a number of examples of reporting domestic or sexual violence in which humour has been used inappropriately.

For example, a national charity included in its magazine an article on Indian women forced through economic circumstances into prostitution which was headed, 'Anybody fancy an Indian?'¹² Not only did this trivialises gender inequality and poverty-driven prostitution, it dehumanises the women involved.

Another article by The Sun used the headline: '*NOT SO 'APPY As millions of single Brits stay home women reveal dating app horror stories – from d*** pics to 'I'll cook you' threat*'.¹³ This headline is particularly irresponsible as the use of humour trivialises the real fear that death threats cause and the danger that women are in.

Reporting should neither sensationalise nor trivialise VAW and should never use a humorous tone.

¹² We can't provide a link to this article as it was removed shortly after publication.

¹³ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/fabulous/11141302/coronavirus-lockdown-dating-app-horror-stories/>

<p>Reporting should never sensationalize a victim's gender identity.</p>	<p>2017 research carried out by King's College London in partnership with All About Trans, looked at how media representation of trans people affects trans people themselves. 78% thought that coverage about trans people was inaccurate and when seeing negative media coverage, 69% felt unhappy, 78% felt angry, 69% felt bad about society, 49% felt excluded and 41% felt frightened. ¹⁴</p> <p>Trans women are specifically targeted for hate crime, often in the form of sexual harassment or sexual assault. ¹⁵ Trans women experience sexist attitudes, discrimination and violence, as all women do, as well as experiencing an additional layer of discrimination for failing to conform to the gender norms expected of them.</p> <p>Research published by Stonewall in January 2018¹⁶ showed that two fifths of trans people (41%) experienced a hate crime in the last 12 months, nearly half of trans people (48%) avoid using public bathrooms, one in four (25%) have experienced homelessness, two in five (40%) have adjusted the way they dress out of fear of harassment or discrimination and one in eight (12%) have been physically assaulted by colleagues or customers in the last year, simply for being trans.</p> <p>The negative portrayal of trans people in the media is particularly worrying because so many transgender children and young people attempt suicide— nearly half (45%). ¹⁷</p> <p>Reports should include information about gender identity only if it is relevant to the story. All transgender people should be treated with dignity and respect, including being referred to by their chosen name.</p>
<p>When covering any form of violence - including harmful traditional practices, like forced marriage or female genital mutilation – reporting must not stigmatize any ethnic group or religion.</p>	<p>There is no evidence that violence against women is more prevalent in BAME communities in the UK, and reporting must avoid implying that any form of violence against women is merely a part of any community's culture or religion.</p> <p>There is evidence, however, that BAME women experience and react to abuse and violence differently to White women. In particular, studies suggest they may be less likely to seek support or to report the abuse to authorities, potentially influenced by a concern that their report will contribute to racist stereotypes. ¹⁸ This means that BAME women may be more likely to remain in situations where they are being abused, and more likely to suffer from poor physical and mental health.</p>

¹⁴ <https://www.allabouttrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Executive-summary-Breaking-the-Binary.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-britain-trans-report>

¹⁶ <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/media-releases/stonewall-report-reveals-impact-discrimination-health-lgbt-people>

¹⁷ https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/the_school_report_2017.pdf

¹⁸ NSPCC (2008) *"I can't tell people what is happening at home": Domestic abuse within South Asian communities: the specific needs of women, children and young people at home*. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/i-cant-tell-people-what-happening-home-report.pdf> p.3

<p>Reporting should incorporate quotations from a range of sources, including from experts such as local and national organisations working to end violence against women. Specialist VAW organisations exist for many groups such as BAME, migrant and LGBTQI+ women, and these should be contacted whenever relevant.</p>	<p>Studies also show that cultural stereotypes have a significant impact on BAME women's experiences of violence and their ability to report it. For example, Black women are often subject to racist stereotypes of hyper-sexuality and promiscuity.¹⁹ This can lead to their accounts of sexual assault and rape being disbelieved and under-reported, perpetuating the false image that only 'innocent' White women are subject to gendered violence.²⁰</p> <p>In cases where BAME women have insecure immigration status, their vulnerability to domestic abuse and inability to access support can be increased by lack of social networks and isolation, having no recourse to public funds, and the threat of deportation should they leave their relationship and lose their right to remain.²¹</p>
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3. Harassment and violence against women

RECOMMENDATIONS	EVIDENCE
<p>Reporting should not name victims of VAW, even in cases where doing so would not be prohibited by law. Naming victims is not essential for any story and can lead to immense distress and further victimisation.</p>	<p>For survivors, identifying information such as names and locations can both exacerbate trauma and complicate recovery. When the press prints a survivor's name, they run the risk of re-victimisation. The survivor may not have shared their experiences with their friends, colleagues, and loved ones, yet are now being exposed in the media. What's more, the associated stigmas of domestic abuse may cause them further harm when they are labelled a 'victim' by a news outlet, as opposed to having the opportunity to tell their own story.</p> <p>Naming survivors can also prevent others who have survived abuse from the same perpetrator from reporting, due to not wanting to be similarly exposed in the press.²² This prevents serial offenders from being brought to justice whilst also preventing survivors from being able to report their abuse, which can often be an extremely valuable part of recovery.</p> <p>Confidentiality in reporting is not only essential for the survivor's wellbeing, it is also important for their safety. Where there is no conviction, or short sentences are given, survivors remain at risk of further, and often aggravated, abuse by the same perpetrator. In fact, the majority of domestic homicides occur just after a separation²³, and talking and harassment are also more likely after a separation. As such, providing the names of survivors can put them at huge risk from the accused perpetrator. Survivors are also more at risk of harassment and violence from members of the public that support the defendant. For example, during the sexual harassment case against Alex Salmond,</p>

¹⁹ <https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/jezebel/>

²⁰ Lykke, L. (2016) 'Visibility and Denial: Accounts of Sexual Violence in Race- and Gender-Specific Magazines' *Feminist Media Studies* 16(2):239-41

²¹ EACH (2012) *Asian Women, Domestic Violence and Mental Health* at <http://www.equation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Asian-women-Domestic-Violence-and-Mental-Health.pdf> pp.10-11

²² This is based on our engagement and recommendation from Scottish Women's Aid, who works with survivors of violence against women.

²³ <https://www.femicidecensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Femicide-Census-10-year-report.pdf>

his supporters complained online that the survivors were acting out of ‘malicious intent’, were working in support of the British state, and should be ‘exposed’.²⁴

4. Accuracy and violence against women

RECOMMENDATION

Reporting should acknowledge that men’s violence against women is caused by gender inequality and an unequal distribution of power that affects women disproportionately more than men.

Reporting should provide a ‘bigger picture’ by placing individual incidents in a wider social context.

EVIDENCE

There is no evidence that suggests that there are problematic numbers of ‘false’ reports of rape made to the police. On the contrary, the Stern Review concluded that: “*there were very few [false reports]. A CPS lawyer told us, ‘They are extremely rare. I have been prosecuting for 20 years, and have prosecuted for a false allegation once.’...An experienced police officer had come across two such cases in 15 years.*”²⁵ Despite this, the balance of coverage is often uneven, with undue prominence given to the very few cases involving a false allegation. The issue is frequently reported without statistics, creating an imbalance of opinion in terms of how rare cases of false allegations are. Women who see unfounded media coverage of false allegations of rape may be less likely to report an incident of rape or sexual violence for fear of not being believed.

Media reports have been found to characterize sexual harassment in the workplace as an individual aberration rather than a systemic issue, and rare use statistics on its prevalence.²⁶ This is despite evidence that it is, in the UK, very much a systemic issue that goes far beyond the inappropriate conduct of a ‘bad-apple’ employee. Research conducted by Zero Tolerance in 2017 found that over 70% of respondents described experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment, teasing or innuendo in their workplace.²⁷

Sexual harassment is a manifestation of gender violence intended to reinforce gendered norms, thus preventing equality in the workplace.²⁸ It is far less common in female-dominated or gender-balanced workplaces than those that are male-dominated. The fact it can be perpetrated by peers or subordinates in addition to superiors is clear evidence that the power being abused is gendered rather than occupational.²⁹ As such, it should not be conflated with workplace bullying. Sexual harassment in the workplace is associated with several negative outcomes including reduced job satisfaction and organizational commitment, withdrawal from work, poor physical and mental health, and post-traumatic stress disorder.³⁰

²⁴ Guardian (2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/sep/02/salmond-crowdfunding-could-put-off-victims-say-campaigners>

²⁵ The Government Equalities Office and the Home Office (2010) *Report by Baroness Vivien Stern CBE of an Independent Review into How Rape Complaints Are Handled by Public Authorities In England And Wales*, p40.

²⁶ McDonald, P. & Charlesworth, S. (2013) ‘Framing Sexual Harassment through Media Representations’ *Women’s Studies International Forum* 37: 95-103

²⁷ Zero Tolerance (2017) ‘Sexism is a Waste....’: the need to tackle violence and misogyny in Scotland’s workplace’ at <https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/resources/Sexism-is-a-waste---the-need-to-tackle-violence-and-misogyny-in-Scottish-workplaces-15.pdf> p4

²⁸ Acker, J. (2009) ‘From Glass Ceiling to Inequality Regimes’ *Sociologie du Travail* 51:199–217

²⁹ Samuels, H. (2003) ‘Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: a Feminist Analysis of Recent Developments in the UK’ *Women’s Studies International Forum* 26(5-6):467-482

³⁰ Willness, C., Steel, P. & Lee, K. (2007), ‘A Meta-Analysis of The Antecedents and Consequences of Workplace Sexual Harassment’ *Personnel Psychology* 60:127–162

	<p>While the complainant wins in only 51% of UK sexual harassment cases ³¹, vexatious claims are vanishingly rare and so undue scepticism should be avoided. As an example, a number of articles featuring the case of a woman who was brutally bullied for calling out sexist and misogynist behaviour by male colleagues at her workplace described the incident as a part of a ‘high jinks’ work culture. ³²</p> <p>Lastly, the majority of sexual harassment is non-physical such as offensive comments, suggestions, leering and hand gestures ³³ and so these should be covered <i>in addition to</i> cases where physical violence was used.</p>
<p>Reporting should never excuse, justify or perpetuate myths about violence against women.</p> <p>Reporting must portray perpetrators of violence accurately as men, boys, husbands, fathers etc. instead of using terms such as brute, beast, fiend or monster, which distance their abuse from ‘ordinary’ men. VAW is always committed by ordinary men.</p> <p>Reporting should not include unnecessary detail of crimes.</p>	<p>Our media monitoring data shows that on average, 1 in 5 articles provided a justification for the perpetrator’s actions. This figure increases to 1 in 3 stories in tabloid papers.</p> <p>Most commonly, VAW is excused or justified in the media through reinforcement of misconceptions about its cause. Violence against women is caused by gender inequality, and yet media reporting often suggests, either explicitly or implicitly, that it is ‘caused’ by factors such as jealousy, alcohol, football or mental health issues. ³⁴</p> <p>Meta-analysis of the link between alcohol and domestic abuse have shown a correlation, not a causal link. ³⁵ We know that there are particular patterns and consequences of alcohol use in relationships where there is domestic abuse, but alcohol is not the cause of the abuse and addressing alcohol use alone will not solve the social problem of domestic abuse. We also know that many men are violent towards their partners when they are sober, and that not everyone who drinks heavily is violent or abusive. As such, focusing on alcohol consumption in reporting minimises the seriousness of abuse. For example, a regional newspaper reported a man attacking his wife using this phrase: “The sweet taste of champagne turned sour...”, suggesting that alcohol was a causal factor.</p> <p>Football is also often used to excuse men’s violence, despite clear evidence ³⁶ that football matches are not the cause of domestic abuse – abusive men are.</p>

³¹ Rosenthal, P. & Budjanovcanin, A. (2011) ‘Sexual Harassment Judgments by British Employment Tribunals 1995–2005: Implications for Claimants and their Advocates’ *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 49: 236–257

³² <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11281282/female-civil-servant-losing-bullying-case/>
<https://www.heraldsotland.com/news/17980935.exposed-victim-fake-story-behind-photo-shocked-world/>

³³ McDonald, P. & Charlesworth, S. (2013) Op. Cit. p99

³⁴ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2922872/royal-navy-sailor-accused-of-raping-a-woman-as-she-slept-claims-she-was-making-pleasurable-noises/>; <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2932300/wicked-ian-stewart-murdered-fiancee-helen-bailey-after-being-driven-into-jealous-rage-by-her-miniature-dachshund/>; <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2964595/matalan-worker-death-cardiff-hotel-worker-andrew-saunders-jailed-murder/>; <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2957827/jealous-husband-decapitated-his-cheating-wife-with-axe-before-giving-her-head-to-cops-in-a-bag/>; <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2971743/mum-feared-she-was-going-to-die-after-she-was-battered-by-ex-in-six-hour-assault-sparked-by-row-over-cleaning/>

³⁵ Cafferky, B., Mendez, M., Anderson, J. & Stith, S. (2016) ‘Substance Use and Intimate Partner Violence: A Meta-Analytic Review’ *Psychology of Violence*, Advance online publication

³⁶ www.sccjr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Football-and-Domestic-Abuse_Literature-Review_25-NOV-2014.pdf
www.betternation.org/2011/03/football-does-not-cause-domestic-abuse/

Poor mental health is another factor frequently used to excuse or justify violence. In one article, a perpetrator was described as “hypersensitive to rejection ... after his mother left”, and “desperate to avoid abandonment”.³⁷ “After she [the victim] dumped him”, the article went on, he was distraught, and his “abnormality of mental function” resulted in her murder.³⁸ In a report on a sailor who had raped a woman while she slept, the focus of the article was on how apologetic and remorseful he was afterwards, and the ‘explanation’ provided that the man is a sex addict who has attended addiction meetings.³⁹

As well as misrepresenting the cause of violence against women, blaming violence on poor mental health also stigmatises those with mental health issues, the vast majority of whom do not perpetrate violence against women.

Currently, the media regularly reinforces rape myths through reporting choices.⁴⁰ This is not necessarily the result of specific journalistic intent, ‘...but rather a correlate of deeply held historical and cultural gender biases in our society...’.⁴¹ Public attitudes are informed by the media, and public attitudes play an enormous role in preventing violence against women. In one very literal sense, it is the public that sit on the juries of rape cases. The rape conviction rate in the UK remains low and one of the reasons for this is the persistence of rape myths amongst the general population.⁴²

Evidence indicates that myths prevent victims from seeking help⁴³ and over-emphasise the prevalence of ‘stranger’ rape scenarios – where a woman is dragged into a dark alley and assaulted by an armed stranger. This is a terrifying prospect, and when it does occur it generates significant media coverage. However, this myth disguises the fact that 83%⁴⁴ of women are raped by *someone they know* – a friend, relative or colleague.

³⁷ The Mirror, 02.02.18, Flora Thompson, Killer “unable to take being abandoned”, p. 15

³⁸ Camber, R., 2017. She was Asleep and Drunk...I had Sex with Her. Scottish Daily Mail, 21 Feb. p5

³⁹ Camber, R., 2017. She was Asleep and Drunk...I had Sex with Her. Scottish Daily Mail, 21 Feb. P5
<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2922872/royal-navy-sailor-accused-of-raping-a-woman-as-she-slept-claims-she-was-making-pleasurable-noises/>

⁴⁰ Franiuk, R., Seefeld, J., Cepress, S. & Vandello, J. (2008) ‘Prevalence and Effects of Rape Myths in the Media: The Kobe Bryant case’ *Violence Against Women* 14:287-309

⁴¹ Esteal, P., Holland, K. & Judd, K. (2015) ‘Enduring Themes and Silences in Media Portrayals of Violence against Women’ *Women’s Studies International Forum* 48:103-113 p.108

⁴² Rich, K. & Seffrin, P. (2012) ‘Police Interviews of Sexual Assault Reporters: Do Attitudes Matter?’ *Violence and Victims* 27(2):263-79; Aronowitz T., Lambert C. & Davidoff S. (2012) ‘The Role of Rape Myth Acceptance in The Social Norms Regarding Sexual Behavior Among College Students’ *Journal of Community Health Nursing* 29:173-183; Weiss, K. (2009) “Boys Will Be Boys” and Other Gendered Accounts’ *Violence Against Women* 15(7):810 - 834; Deming M., Covan E., Swan S. & Billings D. (2013) ‘Exploring Rape Myths, Gendered Norms, Group Processing, and the Social Context of Rape Among College Women: A Qualitative Analysis’ *Violence Against Women* 19(4):465-85; Carr, M., Thomas, A., Atwood, D., Muhar, A., Jarvis, K. & Wewerka, S. (2014) ‘Debunking three rape myths’ *Journal of Forensic Nursing* Oct-Dec;10(4):217-25

⁴³ Maxwell, L. & Scott, G. (2014) ‘A Review of the Role of Radical Feminist Theories in the Understanding of Rape Myth Acceptance’ *Journal of Sexual Aggression* 20(1):40-54

⁴⁴ Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2012/13: Sexual Victimization & Stalking: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/06/3479>

	A list of rape myths is available in our media guidelines: https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/work-journalists/
Reporting should never imply in any way that the victim was even partially to blame.	<p>Commonly, reports focus on the actions or behaviour of victims in the lead up to instances of violence, or on what women 'should' do to avoid being victimised, placing the blame for violence and the responsibility for ending it on victims rather than perpetrators.</p> <p>As an example, The Sun newspaper published this headline: '<i>Woman drank six jaeger bombs in ten minutes on the night she was raped and murdered</i>'.⁴⁵ This report was about the rape and brutal murder of India Chipchase, who was attacked by Edward Tenniswood in Northampton. The perpetrator lured India into a taxi away from her friends before raping her and strangling her to death.</p>
Reporting should never objectify women.	<p>When women are objectified and sexualised directly or indirectly, they are more likely to be blamed for rape and sexual assault and less likely to be perceived as suffering from the experience of being subjected to sexual violence.⁴⁶</p> <p>As an example, in 2017 the Daily Mail published a photograph of Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and British then-Prime Minister Theresa May on the front page with a headline "Never mind Brexit, who won Legs-it!". This headline met with instant criticism from politicians and the public for being sexist and offensive, and yet objectification of less publicly prominent women continues to be found in abundance across the media.</p>
Reporting of commercial sexual exploitation, such as web cams, prostitution or pornography, should include information about dangers and harms.	Many articles covering commercial sexual exploitation do not reference the dangers and harms. One example quoted a woman saying it was a time-saving way to make money, with no counter argument about the damaging effects for individuals or society. ⁴⁷
7. Public safety and violence against women	
RECOMMENDATION	EVIDENCE
The images used to illustrate articles dealing with violence against women should not victimise or objectify women	<p>Many news agencies are using stock images of beaten or bruised women to accompany a news item or feature. Whilst we understand the power of an image to convey the story, using images like these contributes to the problem by reinforcing stereotypes about violence against women.</p> <p>Showing women as victims can reinforce the reader or viewer's impression of women as weak and powerless, which can contribute to the very problem we seek to tackle. As gender base violence is</p>

⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/thesun/status/755867885910851584?lang=en>

⁴⁶ Why Women Are Blamed For Everything: Exploring the Victim Blaming of Women Subjected to Violence and Trauma, Dr Jessica Taylor pg.143

⁴⁷ <https://metro.co.uk/2020/06/10/realistic-guide-onlyfans-people-who-sell-pictures-platform-12825718/>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/webcam-model-working-from-home-2020-8?r=US&IR=T>

	<p>rooted in gender inequality, images that perpetuate the idea that women are less capable than men are damaging.⁴⁸ Certain images can also distort public understanding of the issue; for example, an image of an injured woman to accompany an item on domestic abuse can reinforce the idea that all relationship violence experience by women is physical, as opposed to emotional, psychological or sexual. And images of women working in street prostitution (e.g. images of women in street-lit alleys or leaning into a car) can distract from the reality of the extent of indoor prostitution.</p> <p>Zero Tolerance offers a bank of free stock images: https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/images-for-reporting-vaw/</p>
<p>All reporting featuring violence against women should include information about at least one appropriate helpline.</p>	<p>On average, high-risk victims live in abusive situations for 2.3 years and medium risk victims for 3 years before getting help.⁴⁹</p> <p>Moreover, in 2017-2018, three-quarters of all adult service users who contacted Rape Crisis Centres wanted support around sexual violence that took place at least a year earlier; 42% were adult survivors of child sexual abuse.⁵⁰</p> <p>The stories of survivors who initiated #MeToo movement were widely covered by the press worldwide. This increased reporting of sexual crimes by 10% during its first six months, the effect was persistent and lasted at least 15 months.⁵¹</p> <p>Similarly, the coverage of the Jimmy Savile scandal prompted the 80% increase of calls to the NSPCC helpline from survivors of child sexual abuse.</p> <p>There are a myriad of reasons why women don't reach for help directly after experiencing violence⁵² but seeing a story of someone who has had a similar experience can help them to come forward, report the crime and seek help.</p>

We hope that you find this evidence useful. We would like to offer our help to work with you on improving press standards to ensure that coverage of violence against women by the press challenges, rather than exacerbates, the problem.

⁴⁸ Schwark, Sandra. (2017). Visual Representations of Sexual Violence in Online News Outlets. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 8. 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00774.

⁴⁹ SafeLives (2015), *Insights Idva National Dataset 2013-14*. Bristol: SafeLives.

⁵⁰ <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/rcew-statistics/>

⁵¹ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3496903

⁵² <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/us/kavanaugh-christine-blasey-ford.html?auth=login-google%22%20>

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- Yes

Which of the following best describes you?

- A civil society organization, NGO or charity

Would you be happy for IMPRESS to publish your response?

Yes, I would be happy for you to publish my response and attribute it to me