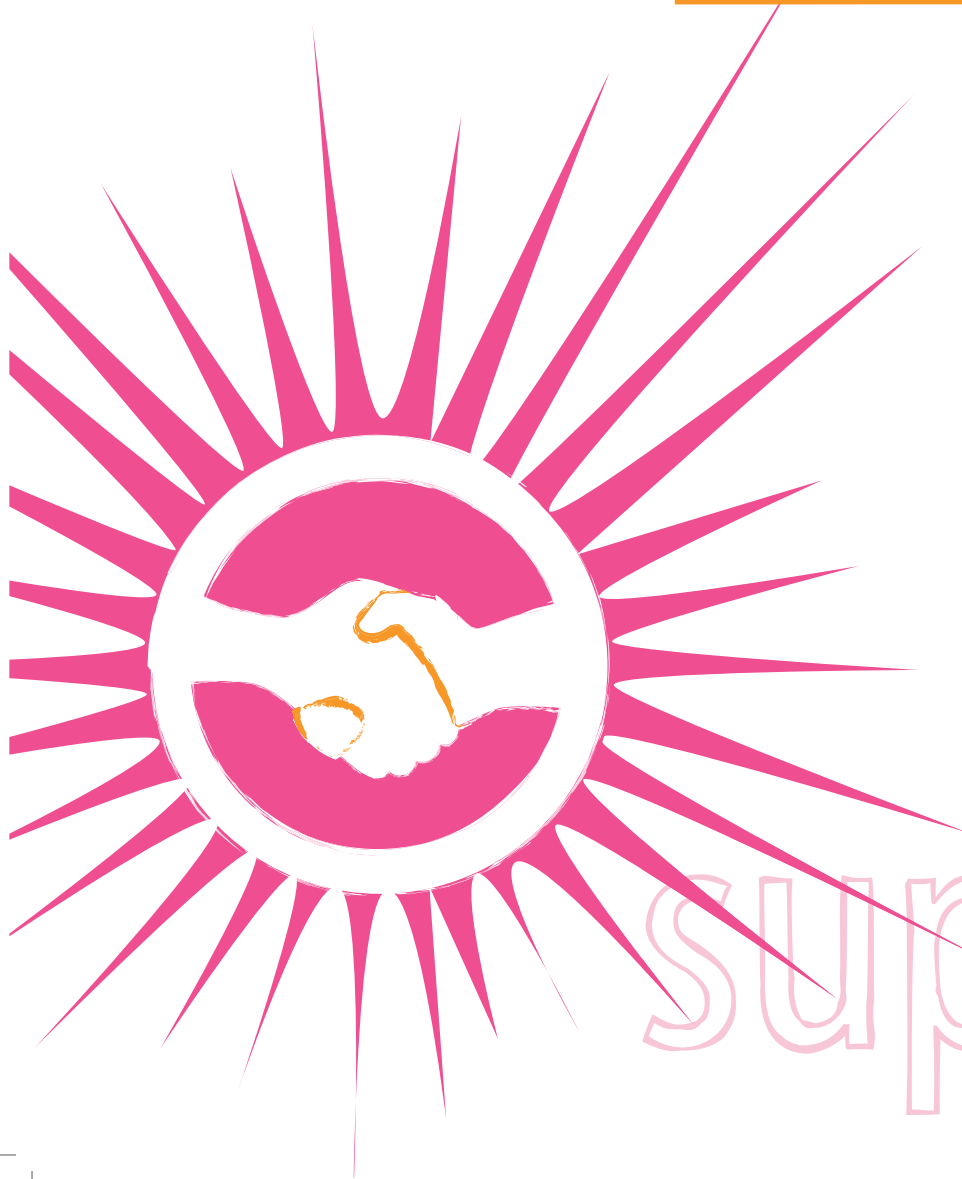


media & advocacy

story ideas



support

Support Stories in the Media

The media often presents stories about the problems in our society. However, journalists do not always know about how people are joining their power to address these problems. With growing community awareness about violence against women and HIV/AIDS, community members and journalists will likely be eager for media stories about people supporting one another to create a community that supports non-violence. Below are a few story ideas you could suggest to journalists—stories they could research and write about to promote supportive relationships that address the issues of power, violence and HIV/AIDS.

Support Story Idea No. 1

MEN SUPPORTING MEN

The majority of men are not violent against women, but the majority are silent about this violence. Men have a responsibility to challenge other men. Although men using violence may at first resent being confronted, many men ultimately feel relief once they have someone to talk to about stress at home. Also, they often show interest in change once they understand the benefits of non-violence. The community would be eager to hear a media story about men who are offering support to other men and helping them make positive changes in their lives. Sometimes, there are people who want to change, but they fear what their peers will say. A story about how men who are changing and supporting one another can encourage other men to change too.

Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with men who are confronting and supporting other men, to learn about the challenges and benefits of providing support to men and tips for doing so.

- Interviews with men who have been supported by other men in learning non-violent ways to manage their relationships.

Support Story Idea No. 2

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Professionals provide a unique type of support for managing and reducing violence against women and HIV in the community. Many professionals are joining together to improve their skills, resources and protocols for providing this type of support. However, few people know about the professional services that exist. Also, the potential experience at a health centre, police department or counselors office remains a frightening mystery for many. Community members are looking for the inside perspective on what to expect and why they should access these services in the first place. A story about professional support for women, men and youth would interest and benefit community members, especially a story that includes tips on where to go and what to expect in various circumstances related to power, violence and HIV/AIDS.

Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with women who have used police and health services after experiencing violence, to hear about the benefits and challenges of accessing these services, and their tips for other women.
- Interviews with men who have joined with their partners in accessing counseling and testing services, to demonstrate that men need support too and how women and men can join their power in accessing support.
- Interviews with police officers, health care workers and counselors, to learn about their services and their efforts to improve services related to violence and HIV/AIDS.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page features a large, stylized orange hand with fingers curled, reaching upwards. Above the hand, there are several orange circles of varying sizes, some solid and some with a dotted pattern, arranged in a semi-circular arc. The background is white with a subtle orange gradient.

Support Story Idea No. 3

THOSE WE KNOW BEST

When formal support is lacking, informal networks of family, friends and community often take their place. A story about informal support networks can remind everyone of the vast safety net available to all of us in times of challenge and change. Such a story could inspire people to make difficult choices and changes in their lives, knowing they can seek out the support of those they know best, such as their family, neighbors, local activists, religious leader and social groups.

People of all backgrounds and ages are supporting others with issues of violence, HIV and AIDS. Hearing about the support they provide can also inspire others to do the same.

Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with religious leaders, to hear about how they support their congregations in addressing issues of power, violence and HIV/AIDS.
- Interviews with neighborhood groups, to hear about the tips and strategies they have developed for creating safe neighborhoods.
- Interviews with local activists, to hear about their reasons for their activism and the rewards of doing so.

Support Story Idea No. 4

THE SUPPORT THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Sometimes the challenges of providing support to others stop us from providing any support at all. We forget how powerful our support could be. Sometimes it helps to hear personal accounts of how support transformed a person's life. In the case of violence against women and HIV/AIDS, women and men have received support from others that not only changed their lives, but in many cases saved their lives. A story about personal experiences in receiving support can help community members realize how the simplest act of support can provide much needed power to another.

Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with women in your community who are survivors of violence and/or living with HIV or AIDS, and who feel strongly about the difference support has made in their journey.
- Interview with men who have adopted a non-violent lifestyle and who feel support from others was a key factor in their success.
- Interviews with young women who have left transactional sex relationships with the support of family and friends.



Support Story Idea No. 5

ACTIVISTS UNITED

All over our communities there are women and men who are courageously challenging the status quo, who are questioning the discrimination and stigma women experience. Despite the social implications, these women and men are speaking out against injustice, reaching out to others, daring to be different in their words and actions. A story about these activists can inspire others to either become activists or support activists. Above all this story can demonstrate how community members can help sustain the positive influences of activism by standing in solidarity with these women and men, reinforcing their messages in everyday conversations, or simply thanking them for their efforts.

Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with high profile activists addressing power, violence and HIV/AIDS, to learn about the challenges of activism and the difference it makes to receive support from others.
- Interviews with community members who may not be high profile activists but who make a point of showing support for activist efforts in small but important ways in their day-to-day lives.

Support Story Idea No. 6

BUSINESSES WITH WISDOM AND HEART

Sometimes businesses get involved in preventing violence against women and HIV/AIDS. They implement progressive policies about HIV/AIDS in the workplace. They support their employees in developing non-violent relationships and have policies to assist those living with violence. They are role models for other business wanting to support their employees in similar ways, but not knowing where to start. A story about these businesses would be an inspiration to the community and sign of changing community norms.

Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with business owners implementing these changes, to hear tips for replicating such efforts.
- Interviews with employees participating in such a workplace, to hear about the benefits of a supportive work environment.



www.raisingvoices.org/sasa.php