

## Welcome

**Welcome to the winter edition of *Connections*, our newsletter for friends and families affected by homicide. This edition focuses on tips on how to deal with the media, your rights and how to make a complaint.**

For some families, dealing with the media adds additional stress to an already overwhelming situation and it can feel really intrusive. It can be extremely difficult for families to hear personal grief played out in the most public way at such a vulnerable time in their lives.

Sometimes the media is helpful, they might be able to reach out to the public to source information that is really important for the Police Investigation as well as help give the family answers if they don't know what happened.



## Our advice for dealing with the media:

- It's OK to decide you don't want to talk to the media. You have every right to decline making a comment.
- Nominate someone you trust to speak on behalf of the family.
- Use an answerphone to filter calls.
- Decide with the family what information you want to share with the public, including on Facebook and social media, as they are public sources.
- Discuss with police/ family liaison what photos you want to give to media.
- Do remember any footage of photos/ videos that you allow the media to use can keep being used in the future without further permission.
- When possible, ask police to notify you of media releases they are making before they release them to the media.
- If you choose to speak with the media, ask for any questions in advance and ask to check if you are being recorded.
- Think carefully before reading coverage about your case. It may be disturbing.
- Talk to Police or your Lawyer about anything you can't say to media. Some statements may impact a case before court.
- Remember there is no such thing as 'off the record' – media can use anything you say at anytime.
- You may wish to make a written statement instead of giving interviews. Police may be able to assist you with this.

Remember that media are not usually trying to help you. It is their job to get a story and they may misrepresent you or your case, or print information that is private or upsetting. Always be cautious and carefully consider every statement or answer you give.

Media can be persistent and resourceful, if you have further concerns and questions, please contact the Police officer in charge of your case, Victim Support on **0800VICTIM (0800 842 846)**, or view our website at **[www.victimsupport.org.nz](http://www.victimsupport.org.nz)**

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## Media and Your Rights:

**Media can have a role of assisting enquiries and the police can guide you on this.** Media can report on a crime, the investigation and criminal proceedings at any stage throughout the judicial process and after the court case. The reports from media can sometimes take people by surprise when they were not expecting it or did not know anything about it.

**Media may approach you requesting an interview.**

Give careful consideration as there are pros and cons in accepting the invitation. It is important to remember any information you give to the media, as it will change from private information to public information. Once the information is available to the media, you will have little control over what is actually reported to the public.

**Media can access court documents and can report on what is in them.**

Victim Impact Statements (VIS) become part of the public record at the courts. The media can access them through the courts and report on their contents. In some longer trials the media might be at court each day and may get to know you quite well. This can make it confusing. It is important to remember the journalist is not a friend or support person. They can keep a record of private conversations for their future reference.

**You don't have to talk to the media – it is your choice.**

It might be easier to give this some thought before you are in this situation – you might not feel prepared when you are approached but you can always contact them at a time you are in more control. You can make notes about the comments or statements you would like to make as a way to help stick to your planned messages. You are under no obligation to talk to the media if you don't want to. Nor do you have to explain to any journalist why you don't wish to speak to them.

**Photos and information.** Any photo you give to the media will be used continually. This may not affect you much in the beginning but may bring you grief further down the track especially if the photo holds special memories of the past, because it may end up holding different meaning. Photos on Facebook or other websites can be taken and published no matter what your privacy settings are. You might want to take down posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram or other sites that have personal information or photographs.

**Where can I go for Media Complaints?**

If you are concerned about anything to do with the media, and there is a current investigation, please discuss your concerns with the officer in charge of your case.

If you want general advice or would like to make a complaint there is information available on the following websites:

**Media Council**

<http://www.mediacouncil.org.nz/>

**Broadcasting Standards Authority**

<https://bsa.govt.nz>



**Media Council**

The New Zealand Media Council is an independent forum for resolving complaints about the following

- Content of newspapers, magazines and periodicals in circulation in New Zealand including their websites.
- Online content of the following broadcasters – TVNZ, Mediaworks, Maori Television, Sky Network Television, NZME Radio and Radio New Zealand.
- Digital sites with news content, including blogs characterised by news commentary, that have been accepted as members of the Media Council.
- Classification of Video-on-Demand content of the following providers – TVNZ, RNZ, Mediaworks, Maori Television, Lightbox, Netflix, Stuff, and NZME.

**Broadcasting Standards authority**

Please visit the Broadcasting Standards Authority website to find out how you can make a complaint. The Broadcasting Standards Authority will handle complaints about programmes broadcast on New Zealand Television and Radio – you need to complain within 20 working days of the broadcast.

The BSA will accept complaints about the following:

- Free-to-air TV programmes
- Pay TV programmes
- Radio Programmes
- Programmes viewed or listened to on demand (only if you can supply details of original TV or radio broadcast and you lodge your complaint within 20 working days of that broadcast)
- Election advertisements on television or radio (during election periods)

You can complain about the following issues:

- Good taste and decency
- Programme information
- Childrens' interests
- Violence
- Law and order
- Discrimination and denigration
- Alcohol
- Balance
- Accuracy
- Privacy
- Fairness

[https://bsa.govt.nz/images/2016\\_Choosing\\_a\\_standard\\_and\\_tips\\_for\\_complainants.pdf](https://bsa.govt.nz/images/2016_Choosing_a_standard_and_tips_for_complainants.pdf)

# My Story

**Tracey Richmond bravely shared her story with us about her own experiences dealing with media as a victim affected by homicide. Thank you Tracey – your insights, advice and authenticity will certainly help other victims navigate the media.**

## The Media...The Good, The Bad & The "Positive"

On 31 July 2016 my eldest sister Kim Richmond went missing. A missing persons investigation began with multiple Search & Rescue, Police Dive Squad and local community searches. The head detective of the operation informed us not to speak with any media and the first media release was The Police with Mum & Dad reaching out through TV News with a plea for Kim to come home or anyone with information to come forward.

The search for Kim continued for 11 months through which time I had many requests for interviews, however there really wasn't anything that could be said, we didn't know anything. But then came that grave day 11 months later when the Police Dive Squad located Kim in the back of her Ford Ranger, at the bottom of Lake Arapuni.

A few days later Cory (Kim's partner of more than 20 years) was arrested during the planning of Kim's funeral and charged with murder. The day of Kim's funeral was when the media really ramped up and were asked to leave the funeral and show some respect, which they did.

Now the requests came in thick and fast for interviews, but me being me took to social media to stalk each and everyone of these journalists to get a background of who each one really was. I struck up an excellent, trusting and confidential media relationship with a freelance journalist working with Woman's Day NZ. We met on a number of occasions to discuss where the case was at and I was showed much respect in regard to how it all was affecting me personally and was promised no information would be released until after the trial had concluded – this is a lot of trust to put in someone when you been betrayed on the highest level by a man you thought was part of your family.

Then came the trial...

Obviously, media are in the courtroom and limited to only a small amount of things they can't report on but the rest is open slather. So as you can imagine while on trial for murdering my sister Kim, Cory had his own version of events if you like, in an attempt to defend himself. The biggest part of his defence was trying to demoralise my sister and make himself the victim. As you can imagine the media had a field day with this and I was horrified to re-live the awful things I'd heard in court through national publications. However, this is what brings me to the positive part of media. With the fantastic relationship I had with my journalist I was able to tell our story as three sisters, what the real Kim was like and the wonderful person she truly was. I used this to my advantage and put all the bad press to rest by



simply telling the truth – my sister was a wonderful person and a fantastic mother. Utmost respect was shown towards not naming Kim's children as this had been the strongest request of confidentiality. Woman's Day produced an outstanding article that truly portrayed the truth of my sister's upbringing and life from there on. And rest assured I'm not finished with media yet, we are just waiting for a few legal matters to be cleared up, then I have a great and well renowned media team waiting in the wings to go ahead with some really big things in regard to Kim's case!!

Aside from my positive experience, Mum and Dad had the same with a reporter from the NZ Herald who kept to her word and confidentiality in much the same way. So, there is good in media out there and we simply need to remind ourselves not to take on board what is reported direct from the court hearing as media are just doing their job, but use the tools of trusting in a journalist to tell your own story to clear up those court hearing releases and get the real truth out there. And just remember, journalists aren't actually allowed to report on a lot of things until a trial is over. All I would say is do your homework on each and every journalist that approaches you before you make a choice...however intuition will generally tell you.

*I wish all of you going through this process the very best.*

## Our support for victims of the Christchurch attacks

**Our hearts go out to all the families who have been affected by the March 15 attacks in Christchurch. This was an unprecedented tragedy for New Zealand and has taken an unprecedented approach to supporting those affected.**

The past 2 months has been a unique experience for Victim Support as an organisation, providing many opportunities and challenges. We will continue in our core role of providing support, guidance, and information to 1,000 victims of the attacks.

Wherever we are needed we'll be there

## About Us...



**Karen**

**Karen is a Victim Support Homicide Service Specialist based in Auckland. Our Homicide Service Specialists' key role is to provide oversight, coordination and monitoring of our homicide support service delivery.**

**Karen shares about her background and what led her to becoming an ideal fit as one of our Homicide Service Specialists!**

I was born in Lancashire, England and came to live in New Zealand in 2007 with my husband and two children. We were attracted to New Zealand because of the lifestyle it offers and believed it would be a much safer place to bring our young children up.

I have worked in the social work sector for 24 years in various roles. In England I was a Detective Constable investigating serious crime including homicide but also a huge part of the role was working alongside the victims and supporting them through the criminal justice system, this is where I discovered my passion and I knew that when I came to New Zealand I wanted to work in a role where the focus was on victims of crime and trauma as opposed to investigating.

My first role in NZ was advocating for victims of family harm with Shine, a role that was extremely challenging, but it was also very rewarding and I really enjoyed it. This role enabled me to gain further experience and become familiar with the NZ justice system.

I moved on from there and joined Victim Support in 2015. I started off as Service Co-ordinator and then moved into my current role of Homicide Service Specialist.

For me this is the perfect role, I am able to put all my knowledge and skills into practice and ensure that victims of homicide receive the best possible service and are treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

Sadly, homicide is the one of the most horrific ways to lose a loved one and although we can never bring that person back, we can help families by walking alongside them on their journey of grief and support them through the criminal justice system.

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## Library corner

### In the library

#### **Murder Survivor's Handbook: Real-Life Stories, Tips & Resources**

provides information, resources, and strategies for learning to live with the aftermath of a homicide. This includes dealing with the criminal justice system (US justice system), addressing the news media, and coping with traumatic grief, while preserving the memory of a loved one. This publication was written in the US so there are some processes that are vastly different to New Zealand but some experiences are universal and the contributions written by other victims are first hand experiences with tips and suggestions aimed at lending a helping hand to those who follow in their footsteps.

#### **Victim Support has an information sheet available on our website:**

**<http://www.victimsupport.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/CopingWithMediaAfterHomicide.pdf>**

**[https://crcvc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Media\\_Booklet\\_Web\\_Version2016\\_en.pdf](https://crcvc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Media_Booklet_Web_Version2016_en.pdf)**

**[https://www.victimsclearinghouse.nsw.gov.au/Documents/bk16\\_media-guide.pdf](https://www.victimsclearinghouse.nsw.gov.au/Documents/bk16_media-guide.pdf)**



## CONTACT

### VICTIM SUPPORT

Get Help: 0800 VICTIM (0800 842 846)  
[enquiries@victimsupport.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@victimsupport.org.nz)  
[victimsupport.org.nz](http://victimsupport.org.nz)  
[facebook.com/victimsupportnz](https://www.facebook.com/victimsupportnz)

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