

Victims' Right to Privacy

The mission of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape is to work to eliminate all forms of sexual violence and to advocate for the rights and needs of victims of sexual assault. 🌊



Position:

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape opposes the release of any information that can be used to infer the identity of a person who is the victim of a sexual assault, without the express written consent of the individual.

Rationale:

Nationally publicized sexual violence cases draw attention to the debate pitting the public's right to know with the sexual violence victim's right to privacy.

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape believes that an individual's right to privacy must not be compromised by that individual's sexual victimization.

Sexual violence victims often must learn against to trust themselves and others to regain control over their lives. This is one of the premises of empowerment counseling embraced by Pennsylvania's rape crisis centers.

To become a survivor of sexual violence, the victim must not be revictimized in any manner by outside sources. It is critical to the healing process that the victim exercise control over decision-making. This includes the right to release or to withhold from authorities, family, friends, and the media any information regarding the sexual assault. Until the stigma of sexual violence is eliminated and the safety of the victim assured, the Pennsylvania Coalition

Against Rape will continue to advocate for the protection of the victim's privacy in all instances, unless the victim consents to voluntarily identify herself/himself.

Background:

Society continues to view sexual violence victims differently from other crime victims. Too often, the behavior and actions of the victim are used to suggest that the victim is partially or fully responsible for their assault. Personal safety of the victim and the victim's family is at risk when the perpetrator and/or the perpetrator's associates have access to information which enables them to threaten or intimidate.

These factors are exacerbated by unbalanced and biased reporting of the media. Releasing the victim's name, address, or other identifying information by any means risks subjecting the victim to public ridicule, harassment, social stigma, as well as compromising the victim's personal safety.

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape may issue statements regarding public policy affecting sexual violence victims and rape crisis centers. All position statements adopted by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape will be viewed as the official position statement, the center, when publicly or privately voicing opposition to the statement, will do so in the capacity of an independent program and in no way as a member of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape.



PENNSYLVANIA COALITION AGAINST RAPE
125 North Enola Drive • Enola, PA 17025
717-728-9740 • 800-692-7445 • TTY 877-585-1091 • pcar.org