

Note: these are crowdsourced ideas on how to facilitate better representation in media related to crime, violence and policing—these are not edicts, demands or judgments. Please add, comment or critique as you see fit. Keep it reasonable and practical. All are welcome.

Side note: this document was started in July 2015, it will be presented for further discussion July 12 at City Bureau's weekly Public Newsroom workshop series, in collaboration with Block Club Chicago and The New School at Build Coffee, 6100 S. Blackstone Ave.

1. When possible, meet readers where they are to identify coverage needs that supplements (not replaces) newsroom-defined coverage, i.e. public meetings, use of tools like Hearken, GroundSource, etc.
2. Stop/reduce use of mugshots (or at least use them evenly across all crime categories.) There's a serious question to consider here re: why and how police choose which mugshots to blast out to press outlets via email. It clearly isn't all of the available mugshots yet it skews toward violent offenses by black/brown "offenders"—either way, the source's motives are worth considering.
3. Slow down on quick turn-around stories re: police charges. They aren't convictions. (Also, stories on charges are often obtained via the CPD press list—operated by the police—or via 26th and Cal, which already has a pre-trial detention problem. Things to consider before posting allegations, see #2).
4. Consider using alternatives to [police language](#) altogether (when possible, of course): victim, suspect, offender, etc. These labels leave room for false dilemmas in reporting in which only limited alternatives to the representation are considered.
5. Talk openly about challenges facing media outlets and solutions that can be exported across the industry.
6. Focus headlines and anti-police protest coverage on [organizers](#) and the message behind the action, not on the numbers game of arrests, cops vs. activists framing, or generic "300 Protesters Marched In Chicago" headlines.
7. Follow up on stories where the police label someone a documented gang *member*.
8. *Request invitation. After introducing yourself, tell the family/friend of a murder victim "my condolences."*
9. Question reliance on and number of official and frequently used sources. Are they the most knowledgeable source, or just the one with a press contact or who you've already spoken to?
10. We need more coverage connecting the dots between social service cuts and increases in crime. Readers should be made aware of the direct impact social services have not only on reducing crime but also reducing recidivism for those released from incarceration. The same news outlets covering both the budget crisis in Springfield Illinois and the murder rate in Chicago routinely fail to point out the direct connection between the two. Crime coverage lacks understanding of the implications of public policy decisions.
11. "We need analysis and context as antidote to sensational local crime of the day hype."
(via Twitter)

12. "Stay away from body count reporting—everything is not GANG RELATED." (via Twitter)
13. "Crime-prevention coverage about something other than policing" (via Twitter)
14. Are are the visual reprsonabiliies on reporting on all forms of violence/crimes?