



JAMES W. FOLEY
LEGACY FOUNDATION

The James W. Foley
Journalism Safety Modules

UPDATED: May 3, 2021

Developed in collaboration with the
Marquette University Diederich College of
Communication

Contents

Lessons for Undergraduate Journalism and Communications Programs: An Overview1

Module 1: Introduction to Journalism Safety2

BE SAFE (Before Everything Stop Assess Focus Enact)..... 2

 “Six months later, the Capital-Gazette shooting still resonates, among family, community, news industry” Jean Marbella, *The Baltimore Sun* 3

 “Doing No Harm: The Call for Crime Reporting that Does Justice to the Beat” Natalie Yahr, *Center for Journalism Ethics* 3

 “We Need to Talk About the Dangers of Journalism” Melanie Pineda, *Washington Square News*..... 4

Module 2: Developing Safe Journalistic Habits5

 Risk Assessments for Journalists 5

 “For student journalists, the beats are the same but the protections are different” Stephanie Sugars, *Freedom of the Press Foundation* 5

 “Safety and Self-care Strategies for Every Beat” Annie Hylton, *Dart Center* 6

 “Photographer Tom Fox on encounter with Dallas gunman: ‘He’s going to look at me around that corner’ and shoot” Sharon Grigsby, *Dallas News*..... 6

 “RTDNA Survey Reveals Increased Violence Toward Journalists.” *RTDNA* 7

 “7 safety tips for on-the-scene journalists” *Muck Rack Blog* 7

Module 3: Running a Newsroom – Creating a Culture of Safety8

 Risk Assessments for Newsroom Managers..... 8

 “10 resolutions for newsroom managers in 2018” Jill Geisler, *Columbia Journalism Review* 9

 “Plan for the expected and unexpected: What you need to think about when completing a risk assessment” Caroline Scott, *WAN IFRA: World Association of News Publishers* 9

 “Diversity and Inclusivity in Journalism” *American Press Institute (API)*..... 9

 “Editors’ Checklist: Preparing for U.S. protest assignments” *Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)* .. 10

 “Are Newsrooms Doing Enough to Take Care of Their Journalists’ Mental Health and Safety?” Nu Yang, *Editor and Publisher* 10

 “Coping with Emotional Trauma in the Newsroom” Kenna Griffin, *Prof KRG: A practical resource for student journalists* 11

 “Journalists of Color Face Harassment by Sources” Jane C. Hu, *The Open Notebook* 12

Module 4: On Assignment – Mitigating Risk13

 “The US is now a ‘noticeably problematic’ place to be a journalist, report shows” Lucy Handley, *CNBC* 13

 “Covering Injustice: Safety Tips for Reporting on Protests” *International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)* 13

 “It’s time to change the way the media reports on protests. Here are some ideas.” Kendra Pierre-Louis, *Nieman Lab*..... 14

“Reporting Safely from Sandy Hook to Ferguson” Yamiche Alcindor, <i>Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma</i>	14
“7 safety tips for on-the-scene journalists” <i>Muck Rack Blog</i>	15
“You’re Asian, Right? Why Are You Even Here?” Aaron Mak, <i>Politico</i>	15
Scenario, Three Parts: Aaron Mak Covering the Sherman Park Riots (Milwaukee 2016).....	15
“Arrests at 2008 RNC in St. Paul” (Video) from <i>KARE 11</i> , Minneapolis, MN.....	17
Biography of Cengiz Yar	17
Scenario, two parts: Cengiz Yar Covering the Republican National Convention (Cleveland 2016)	17
*** Module 5: Photojournalism – Staying Safe (Added May 3, 2021)	21
“Video & recap: Caring for photojournalists – Preventing burnout, treating trauma and ensuring equity” <i>Journal Institute, The National Press Club</i>	21
“Photojournalism best practices during COVID-19” <i>International Journalists’ Network (IJNET)</i>	21
“Photojournalists: The key to getting published and staying safe” Glenn Edwards, <i>Thomson Foundation</i>	22
“#SafetyInFocus: Photojournalists at risk” <i>Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)</i>	23
“‘We face a different danger,’ war photographer Paul Conroy says” Lucy Westcott/CPJ James W. Foley Fellow, <i>Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)</i>	23
“When Should Journalists Put Down the Mic and Lend Aid?” Patrick L. Plaisance, <i>Psychology Today</i> .	23
“Safety Tips for Travel Photographers (Particularly Women)” Karthika Gupta, <i>Digital Photography School</i>	24
Module 6: Reporting on – and during – the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	25
“CPJ Safety Advisory: Covering the coronavirus outbreak” <i>Committee to Protect Journalists</i>	25
“Media ethics, safety and mental health: reporting in the time of Covid-19” Hannah Storm, Director, <i>Ethical Journalism Network (EJN)</i>	26
“U.S. video journalist shares tips for covering COVID-19: ‘We have to get creative’” <i>Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)</i>	27
“Reporting on coronavirus: Handling sensitive remote interviews” Jo Healey, <i>Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma</i> (originally published by <i>BBC Academy</i>).....	28
“How Journalists Can Deal with Trauma While Reporting on COVID-19” Olga Simanovych, <i>Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)</i>	29
“Covering COVID-19: Concepts, sources, treatments, and more” Aldana Vales, <i>International Journalists’ Network (IJN)</i>	29
“How journalists can work from home securely” <i>Freedom of the Press Foundation</i>	30
Additional COVID-19 Resources	30
Module 7: Foreign Conflicts – Staying Safe Abroad.....	31
<i>Jim: The James Foley Story</i> (2016), HBO, Director: Brian Oakes	31
“The Principles: We Must Embed a Culture of Safety in Our Profession” <i>ACOS Alliance</i>	32
“A Field Guide for Correspondents” Charles Sennott, <i>The GroundTruth Project</i>	33

“In Syria, freelancers like James Foley cover a dangerous war zone with no front lines” Ellen Shearer, <i>Washington Post</i>	33
“James Foley’s Choices” Mark Singer, <i>The New Yorker</i>	34
“Why the Best War Reporter in a Generation Had to Suddenly Stop” Mark Warren, <i>Esquire</i>	34
“The Rules of Conflict Reporting are Changing” Janine di Giovanni, <i>Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)</i>	34
Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) <i>US Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs</i>	35
*** Module 8: Wrongful Detention, Kidnapping, and Hostage Survival (Added May 3, 2021)	36
“Tips for Independent Media Facing Security Risks” SembraMedia, <i>International Journalists’ Network (IJN)</i>	36
“Journalists Under Attack: Lessons from the Field” Jennifer Dorroh, <i>International Journalists’ Network (IJN)</i>	37
“Journalist Held Captive by Pirates says Focus and Forgiveness were Crucial” Interview with Michael Scoot Moore by Dave Davies, <i>National Public Radio (NPR)</i>	37
“German journalist who gave birth as hostage in Syria speaks of ordeal” Philip Oltermann, <i>The Guardian</i>	37
“After escaping captivity, American detainees come home to credit penalties” Ali Rogin, <i>PBS</i>	38
The Experience of Caitlan Coleman.....	39
Scenario, Five Parts: Caitlan Coleman, Afghanistan.....	39
Module 9: Understanding Journalists’ Rights	44
“What some reporters get wrong about the First Amendment” Jonathan Peters, <i>Columbia Journalism Review (CJR)</i>	44
“Journalists, attacked by police and rioters alike, must build local bridges” Joel Simon, <i>CPJ</i> , from <i>Columbia Journalism Review</i>	45
“Police, Protesters and the Press” <i>Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press (RCFP)</i>	45
“Student journalists covering protests face unprecedented violence from police” Joe Severino, <i>Student Press Law Center (SPLC)</i>	46
“RTDNA Guidelines: Journalist Arrests” <i>Radio Television Digital News Association</i>	47
Module 10: Diversity in the Newsroom & the Targeting of Female and Minority Journalists.....	48
“Diversity and Inclusivity in Journalism” <i>American Press Institute (API)</i>	48
“Five decades after Kerner Report, representation remains an issue in media” Darren Walker, <i>Columbia Journalism Review</i>	48
“Journalism for Black Lives: A Reporting Guide” <i>The Movement for Black Lives and Free Press</i>	49
“Journalists of color facing racism head-on: ‘It kind of rips you apart’” April Simpson, <i>Current: News for People in Public Media</i>	49
“Journalists of Color Face Harassment by Sources” Jane C. Hu, <i>The Open Notebook</i>	50
“IWMF Emergency Fund” <i>International Women’s Media Foundation</i>	51

“Why going solo is a risk for female reporters in the US and Canada” Lucy Westcott, James W. Foley Fellow, <i>Committee to Protect Journalists</i>	51
“The cost of reporting while female” Anne Helen Petersen, <i>Columbia Journalism Review</i>	52
Module 11: Self-Care – Addressing Emotional Trauma	53
“For Reporters Covering Stressful Assignments, Self-Care is Crucial” Catherine Stifter, <i>Center for Health Journalism</i>	53
“How journalists can take care of themselves while covering trauma” Kari Cobham, <i>Poynter</i>	54
“How journalists practice self-care while covering tough stories” Elite Truong, <i>Poynter</i>	54
“Journalist Self-Care” <i>Mindset: Reporting on Mental Health</i> (includes two videos)	55
“Covering Trauma: Impact on Journalists” River Smith, Elana Newman, Susan Drevo, Autumn Slaughter, <i>Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma</i>	55
“Self Care Tips for News Media” from <i>Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma</i>	56
Module 12: Dealing with Online Harassment and Cyberbullying.....	57
“RSF publishes report on online harassment of journalists” from <i>Reporters Without Borders</i>	57
“Patrolling the Trolls: How Journalists Can Cope with Harassment and Threats” Shannon Ramlochan, <i>Beyond Bylines: Covering the Intersection of Journalism, Emerging Media and Blogging</i>	57
“Tips and tools for journalists to deal with online harassment” Natasha Tynes, <i>IJNET: International Journalists’ Network</i>	58
“The column I won’t write because of a troll with a gun” Theresa Vargas, <i>Washington Post</i>	58
“Trolls and threats: Online harassment of female journalists” Maria Ressa, Sagarika Ghose, and Hannah Storm (Contributors), <i>Al-Jazeera: The Listening Post</i>	58
Module 13: Protecting Sources – Emotional Trauma	60
“Tragedies & Journalists: A Guide for More Effective Coverage” Joe Hight and Frank Smyth, <i>Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma</i>	60
“When interviewing trauma victims, proceed with caution and compassion” Sherry Ricchiardi, <i>IJNET: International Journalists’ Network</i>	60
“Interviewing people who have experienced trauma” Qainat Khan, <i>The GroundTruth Project</i>	61
“Tips for Interviewing Survivors” <i>RAINN, the nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization</i>	61
Module 14: Working with Hostile Sources	63
“The art of the interview: Asking the hard questions about asking the hard questions” Ann Friedman, <i>Columbia Journalism Review</i>	63
“How to Conduct Difficult Interviews” Mallory Pickett, <i>The Open Notebook</i>	63
“How Do I Handle a Hostile Source?” Joe Grimm, <i>Poynter</i>	63
“Journalists of Color Face Harassment by Sources” Jane C. Hu, <i>The Open Notebook</i>	64
Module 15: Digital Security	65
“Digital Safety Kit” <i>Committee to Protect Journalists</i>	65
“Tips for digital security” Qainat Khan, <i>The GroundTruth Project</i>	65

“Journalism School?: Lessons in security they might not teach at your J-school” <i>Surveillance Self-Defense</i>	66
“Five digital security tools to protect your work and sources” Spencer Woodman, <i>ICIJ: International Consortium of Investigative Journalists</i>	66
“Are You Savvy About Digital Security?” Sarah Wild, <i>The Open Notebook</i>	67
Module 16: Covering Natural Disasters and Weather-Related Events	68
“This is our Super Bowl: why do reporters go into the eye of the storm?” Luke O’Neil, <i>The Guardian</i>	68
“Self-Care Amid Disaster” Joe Hight, <i>Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma</i>	68
“Hurricane Reporter’s Checklist” <i>RTDNA: Radio Television Digital News Association</i>	69
“In a Tornado’s Path: Reporting the Spring Storm Season” <i>Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma</i>	69
“Weather” Mike Reilley, <i>Journalist’s Toolbox</i>	70
Risk Assessment for Journalists	71
Risk Assessment for Newsroom Managers	72
Additional Resources	73
U.S. Press Freedom Tracker	73
The Journalists of Color Resource Guide	73
“Rights Groups Urge Authorities to Prevent and Account for Attacks Against Journalists” from <i>Human Rights Watch</i>	73
<i>Reporters Without Borders: Safety Guide for Journalists</i>	73
“Photographers Are Gearing Up for the Republican Convention Like It’s War” Nick Stockton, <i>Wired</i>	73
“Some Practical Advice about Covering High Profile News Stories” Mickey H. Osterreicher	73

James W. Foley Journalism Safety Modules

Lessons for Undergraduate Journalism and Communications Programs: An Overview

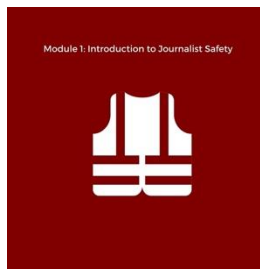
The James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, in collaboration with Marquette University's Diederich College of Communication, developed the James W. Foley Journalism Safety Modules with undergraduate students of journalism and communication studies in mind. These safety modules serve as the undergraduate companion piece to the James W. Foley Journalist Safety Guide.* Our goal is to introduce journalism and communications students to safety as a key component of the craft of journalism. We believe the safety of young journalists is of paramount importance and that aspiring journalists must know how to prepare for – and respond to – danger if they choose to pursue a career in this field.

The James W. Foley Journalism Safety Modules are intended to help educators create a culture that promotes safety for all journalism and communications students. Each module is designed to be implemented into existing courses. Depending on the needs of the instructor and the content covered in the course, the modules can be incorporated into part of a class period, a full class period, or multiple class periods. Some instructors include one module into their course; others have incorporated materials from multiple modules. When implementing the safety module materials, instructors may use all the readings and/or scenarios or select among them. In addition, modules do not have to be followed in a linear pattern; rather, instructors should incorporate modules into existing courses based on how the materials fit with the content of their course.

Through the implementation of these safety modules, our goal is to inspire students and instructors to think about safety throughout the undergraduate experience. The 16 safety modules cover a variety of topics, including, but not limited to, completing risk assessments, the responsibilities of newsroom managers, the safety of female and minority journalists, covering civil unrest (including protests), reporting during the current pandemic, emotional self-care, care of sources, interviewing hostile sources, reporting on foreign conflicts, protecting digital data, and covering weather-related stories. Along the way, students will learn to view safety as an essential component of strong, healthy, and ethical journalism.

*The James W. Foley Journalist Safety Guide, designed by Ellen Shearer of the Medill School of Journalism and available at <https://jamesfoleyfoundation.org/journalist-safety>, is intended to serve graduate students in journalism. The Journalist Safety Guide was created through a collaboration of Medill's National Security Journalism Initiative and the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, and in partnership with *Reporters Without Borders* and *A Culture of Safety Alliance (ACOS)*.

The James W. Foley Legacy Foundation would like to thank the Scripps Howard Foundation and the Society of Professional Journalists Foundation for their generous support of this project.



Module 1: Introduction to Journalism Safety

Objective

Early in the undergraduate experience, journalism and communications students learn about importance of a free press in democracies and how the U.S. Constitution specifically protects the freedom of the press. Quite simply, the importance of a free press cannot be overstated. In *Democracy in America* (1835 & 1840), Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, “The more I observe the main effects of a free press, the more convinced am I that, in the modern world, freedom of the press is the principal...element of freedom.” Attacks on the media are nothing new, but journalists face an increasingly hostile environment. The Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics posits the following: Journalists should “seek truth and report it” and they “should be honest, fair, and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.” More than ever, being a courageous journalist requires the tools to be a safe journalist.

Just as aspiring journalists should consider the important role a free press plays in a democracy, they should also think about the importance of safety in the field of journalism – their physical and emotional safety, the safety of their colleagues, the safety of their sources, the safety of their digital data, the safety of their equipment, etc. As journalists, students will learn that ‘safety’ is more than just responding to uncomfortable and/or dangerous situations. Safety begins by developing everyday habits that allow journalists to effectively and confidently practice their craft. This includes practicing skills that may not seem to fall under the heading of ‘safety,’ such as getting to know an area by walking around the city and visiting new neighborhoods to gain a greater understanding of the places in which they work. These basics can help keep journalists safe even in spaces that may not appear unsafe.

BE SAFE (Before Everything Stop Assess Focus Enact)

This introductory module is designed to develop safe habits for aspiring journalists, editors, newsroom managers and media members. During orientation or early in the semester, each student should be introduced to the **easy-to-remember** acronym **BE SAFE** (Before Everything Stop Assess Focus Enact). Create a business card with **BE SAFE** on one side and a summary of the Society of Professional Journalists preamble with important contact #s on the other side. See below:

<p>B.E. S.A.F.E.</p> <hr/> <p><small>Issued by the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Marquette University</small></p>	<p>Before Everything: Stop. <i>Don't rush into a story, interview, situation.</i></p> <p>Assess. <i>Where are you going? Who are you interviewing? What is your purpose?</i></p> <p>Focus. <i>Think through what can go right/wrong.</i></p> <p>Enact. <i>Your plan.</i></p>
--	---

The ethical journalist is **accurate** and **fair**; treats sources, subjects, colleagues and the public **respectfully**; meets the highest and primary obligation to **serve the public**; takes **responsibility** for one's work; and is willing to **explain one's decisions** to the public.

From: Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics

On-Campus Police: 414.288.1911 **Off-Campus Police:** 911

SPLC: 202.785.5450 **RCFP:** 800.336.4243

Marquette Counseling Center: 414.288.7172

Students should carry this card as a reminder to think about safety as part of the profession.

Suggested Readings

“Six months later, the Capital-Gazette shooting still resonates, among family, community, news industry” Jean Marbella, *The Baltimore Sun* (Dec. 20, 2018)

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/year-in-review/bs-md-yir-capital-gazette-1231-story.html>

Written six months after the shooting at the *Capital-Gazette*, this article discusses the heated rhetoric surrounding journalism while also emphasizing the importance of local journalism: “Without local journalism, you don’t have a community,” [Lucy] Dalglish said. “This is how people develop a civilization, how they develop a civil society.” This is a reminder that journalism and, in particularly local journalism, is essential to our democracy, our way of life.

Discussion Questions

1. What are your motivations for pursuing journalism and/or communications?

This will provide students with the opportunity to voice their interest in the field and discuss what they view as important about this profession.

2. Why do you think the role of the media is under so much scrutiny?

Discuss how impressions about media have changed over time and the impact this has had on journalism, particularly related to safety.

3. Why is it important to learn safety training when preparing to work in the media?

Students may feel that all journalists/media members need to have safety training, or they may feel that it depends on the stories being covered. In truth, all stories can have the potential to become dangerous, from local school board meetings to sporting events to accidents, fires, etc. Journalists must be prepared.

“Doing No Harm: The Call for Crime Reporting that Does Justice to the Beat” Natalie Yahr, *Center for Journalism Ethics* (Aug 22, 2019)

<https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/2019/08/22/doing-no-harm-the-call-for-crime-reporting-that-does-justice-to-the-beat/>

The best journalism is ethical journalism. Young journalists should understand being safe does not mean only considering the risks they may face. Journalists must consider the harm they may cause themselves, the local community, and/or the journalism profession if they do not maintain ethical standards. Safety reaches far beyond the newsroom. Yahr writes, “Pressure to meet deadlines or be first on a story can push reporters to publish before they’ve got all the facts, and incomplete or inaccurate stories can harm

multiple players. Outlets may have to issue corrections or retractions or fight lawsuits. Reporters may face reprimand. Innocent people may be unjustly maligned, and readers may lose confidence in journalists' reporting."

Discussion Questions

1. **Often when thinking about safety, the focus may be on physical or emotional risks, threats, or dangers. But safety goes beyond that. How does being an ethical journalist help ensure the safety of the journalist, the community, and the journalism profession?**

One of the first things a young journalist learns is "Do no harm." Young journalists should consider how being an ethical journalist is the foundation for being a safe journalist. Instructors are encouraged to explore how being ethical is the foundation for safely performing the craft of journalism. In today's 24/7 news cycle, there is pressure to get the scoop first. In this article, Gary Fields, formerly of the *Washington Post* and *USA Today*, recognizes this pressure and offers this advice: "Get it right first, then get it first."

"We Need to Talk About the Dangers of Journalism" Melanie Pineda, *Washington Square News* (Oct 16, 2018)

<https://nyunews.com/2018/10/15/10-16-ops-pineda/>

Melanie Pineda mentions the importance of journalism programs incorporating safety into the curriculum. Despite safety becoming more of an issue for U.S.-based reporters, the focus primarily remains on the safety concerns of journalists working abroad. What responsibility do journalism and communications programs have when it comes to preparing students to *safely* practice journalism?

Discussion Questions

1. **Why should journalism programs incorporate safety lessons into their curriculum? What types of danger do journalists – here and abroad – face? After responding to the first question, students, working individually or in small groups, should generate a list of dangers journalists face. Discuss.**

Journalism has grown more dangerous in recent years. While there is inherently more danger for journalists covering conflicts, that does not mean that there are not risks – physically, emotionally, digitally – to journalists working any beat in any country.

Journalists have been physically targeted and harassed in person and online. In some cases, U.S. media members have been arrested for doing their jobs (e.g., Ferguson, MO). The media has been vilified and labeled "fake news" by former President Trump, and individual media members have been singled out.



Module 2: Developing Safe Journalistic Habits

Objective

When preparing to cover a story, journalists must understand their decisions will have direct bearing on their safety and the safety of others. While there can be risk in covering any story, careful planning and a thoughtful risk assessment can help mitigate the dangers. It is important to have thought through how to manage risk and how to respond in any situation.

Dual goals then arise: Reporting accurately and completely if a situation turns chaotic and dangerous while minimizing risk to avoid injury or worse. The best way to mitigate risk is through preparation. Of course, journalists should assume controversial issues such as abortion, police shootings, or divisive political campaigns or rallies have the potential to become violent. Think about the rhetoric being used and the types of groups involved. However, risk assessments should be completed before covering any story. Do not assume that because similar events have not been dangerous, the assignment will be safe. Much depends on a journalist's ability to react in situations that can turn in the blink of an eye. Advanced preparation – even practicing responses to danger – can help reporters react correctly without thinking. Journalists should also be realistic about their physical and emotional thresholds. If a journalist deems the risk too great, the decision should not be treated as a source of shame or stigma.

Journalists must avoid assuming there is no risk in covering less controversial or risky stories. Recent history – Boston marathon bombing, Las Vegas concert shooting, the attack at the *Capital-Gazette* newsroom – shows journalists and newsroom employees must always be prepared. Not scared. Prepared.

Readings & Scenario

Risk Assessments for Journalists (See page 71)

Risk assessments help journalists, crew members, and newsroom managers prepare for potential risks. A risk assessment identifies possible risks that may be encountered and helps to mitigate them. In short, journalists, crew members, and newsroom managers need to do their due diligence when assessing the risk/reward of covering any story. Young journalists should talk to colleagues or instructors who have worked or reported on similar beats. This can include peers, instructors, and other experienced journalists.

Every risk assessment is context dependent. Remember conflict zones are not the only places where danger is involved. Journalists should take a risk assessment-informed approach because all reporting carries the possibility of risk. Journalists, crew members, and newsroom managers should complete risk assessments that cover steps taken from the beginning to the proposed end of the assignment.

Think through potential “What if...?” scenarios to help identify and classify potential risks. This should include both possible and improbable threats that may arise when covering an assignment. Ultimately, the most important question every journalist must confront is whether the risks involved are worth the benefits of covering a story and completing the assignment.

“For student journalists, the beats are the same but the protections are different” Stephanie Sugars, *Freedom of the Press Foundation* (Dec 2, 2019)

<https://pressfreedomtracker.us/blog/student-journalists-beats-are-same-protections-are-different/>

This article addresses press freedom challenges student journalists face, which are similar to those their professional counterparts experience. Consider how the shuttering of many newsrooms has expanded the reach of student journalists as they begin to fill that void and provide local journalism for many communities. Stephanie Sugars notes that student journalists “assume many of the same risks, including legal challenges, subpoenas, arrests, assaults and secondary screenings when crossing the border.”

Discussion Questions

1. How has the changing landscape of journalism impacted the role of student journalists?

Explore the role of student journalism not only as it relates to the school community, but the surrounding community as well. Student journalists often fill the void of local journalism. This increases the responsibility that young journalists must assume and, as such, should be considered when preparing to cover local stories.

2. What are some of the risks that student journalists may face?

Risks may be physical (assaults), emotional (online harassment and cyberbullying), or legal (subpoenas and arrests). Being aware of this, students should know their rights. Awareness will help young journalists pursue their craft more safely.

“Safety and Self-care Strategies for Every Beat” Annie Hylton, *Dart Center* (Nov 9, 2015)

<https://dartcenter.org/resources/panel-offers-strategies-on-safety-security-and-self-care>

This resource from the *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma* offers advice from three experienced media members and is a reminder that ALL journalists must take safety measures and precautions seriously.

Discussion Questions

1. What makes Yamiche Alcindor, Donna DeCesare, and Danny Spriggs media experts?

Alcindor, White House correspondent for the *PBS NewsHour*, has covered protests in Ferguson, MO, and Baltimore; DeCesare, a documentary photographer, has focused on civil conflict, natural disaster, and gang members and their families throughout Latin America and the United States and teaches journalism at University of Texas-Austin; Spriggs, vice president of global security at the *Associated Press*, spent decades in the Secret Service.

2. Safety does not happen by accident. In order to BE SAFE*, journalists need to continuously make intentional choices. What are some of the safety strategies that Alcindor, DeCesare, and Spriggs discuss? How do these strategies help journalists to “BE SAFE”?

- Many of the strategies offered – be prepared, know yourself, be mindful, bring the right equipment, complete a risk assessment, know where you are going, etc. – are the foundation for developing safe habits when it comes to a journalist’s safety. Instructors can connect these seemingly simple strategies into practice in order to BE SAFE*.
- Use the Risk Assessment for Journalists (see page 71) to encourage young journalists to think about their safety, the safety of their colleagues, and the safety of others.
- * **Before Everything Stop Assess Focus Enact (from Module 1)**

“Photographer Tom Fox on encounter with Dallas gunman: ‘He’s going to look at me around that corner’ and shoot” Sharon Grigsby, *Dallas News* (June 17, 2019)

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/dallas/2019/06/17/dmn-photographers-encounter-gunman-going-look-around-corner-going-shoot>

Photographer Tom Fox was on assignment to photograph a defendant in a fraud case. While waiting, a gunman started shooting near where Fox was stationed. Fox snapped a picture of the shooter staring directly at him at a close distance. Heading into the day, Fox simply planned to cover this fraud case and

then head over to cover a mayoral and City Council inauguration. However, this was not the first time Fox encountered something unexpected. In the article, Fox recalls a time when he was attacked by pit bulls “in the middle of nowhere” in Louisiana while covering the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This serves as a basic reminder to always expect the unexpected.

Discussion Question

1. **Was there any way that Fox could have been prepared for an active shooter when covering the fraud case at the courthouse? Why is it important for journalists to at least consider these types of incidents occurring? Discuss.**

There is no way to be absolutely prepared for an incident like this, but in Fox’s case, he hid behind the column of the building and “made himself as small as possible.” Fox waited where he was until he observed police running down the street in the direction of the shooter. At that point, Fox determined it was safe enough to move from his location.

Journalists need to expect the unexpected and have a plan because that can be the difference between life and death. Journalists need to think through various scenarios before heading out on assignment in case the unexpected occurs.

“RTDNA Survey Reveals Increased Violence Toward Journalists.” *RTDNA* (April 29, 2021)

http://www.insideradio.com/free/rtdna-survey-reveals-increased-violence-toward-journalists/article_a09250fe-a932-11eb-8ccf-a7081481b38e.html

In their annual study of newsrooms, Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) provides information about the number of news reporters and journalists are being assaulted while out in the field.

Discussion Question

1. **Based on this survey, what risks have increased for journalists working in the field? Knowing this, what can journalists and newsrooms do to stay safe?**

According to RTDNA, a startling “One in five TV news directors reported attacks on employees, while 86% of news directors changed procedure to protect employees. These news directors say they have purchased bullet-proof vests and gas masks and also send security teams out with reporters.

“During the past year, the job of seeking and reporting the truth became increasingly dangerous. Journalists were threatened, assaulted and arrested at an alarming rate while on the job,” the RTNDA said in a release. “We faced unprecedented levels of verbal and physical violence at the hands of civilians, police and the leaders we are meant to hold accountable.”

“7 safety tips for on-the-scene journalists” *Muck Rack Blog* (July 8, 2014)

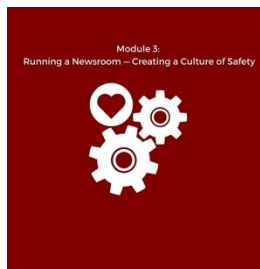
<https://muckrack.com/blog/2014/07/08/7-safety-tips-for-on-the-scene-journalists>

This resource, included here and in Module 4, provides seven specific steps for journalists to take when covering developing stories and giving firsthand accounts of things happening, especially if this requires being in harm’s way in order to capture the story.

Discussion Question

1. **What are the seven steps mentioned in this article? Why is it important to take these steps when covering developing stories? List and discuss.**

- What to carry; First-Aid kit; Be aware of your surroundings; Bring important information
- What to wear; Take care of yourself; Do not work alone



Module 3: Running a Newsroom – Creating a Culture of Safety

Objective

This module will assist aspiring newsroom managers in considering the safety of journalists and other staff members when handing out assignments. Newsroom managers should not fault or penalize a journalist for questioning or turning down an assignment if the risk is deemed too great. Newsroom managers should clearly inform their staff about the support that is provided, including emotional counseling for those who experience trauma on the job. If these issues are not addressed when a journalist begins a story, stressful complications may result later. Additionally, newsroom managers should always check in on their staff after a story has been covered, especially stories that involve traumatic situations.

Readings/Resources

Risk Assessments for Newsroom Managers Modified from *Rory Peck Trust* with input from Mark Zoromski, Marquette University Director of Student Media (See page 72)

Risk assessments help journalists, crew members, and newsroom managers prepare for risks when covering any assignment. The goal is to identify possible risks and mitigate them. In short, journalists, crew members, and newsroom managers need to do their due diligence when assessing the risk/reward of covering any story. It is often useful for young journalists to talk to colleagues or instructors who have worked or reported on similar beats. This includes peers, instructors, and other journalists.

Every risk assessment is context dependent and changes based on assignment. Recognize that conflict zones are not the only place where there is risk and danger involved. Journalists should take a risk assessment-informed approach to reporting because all reporting carries the possibility of danger.

Journalists, crew members, and newsroom managers should complete risk assessments that cover steps taken from the beginning to end of the assignment. When completing a risk assessment, journalists, crew members, and newsroom managers should draw upon their own experiences while also consulting more experienced colleagues and sources to more fully understand the nature of threats that could arise.

Think through potential “What if...?” scenarios to help identify and classify potential risks. This can include both possible and improbable threats that may arise when covering an assignment. Ultimately, the most important question a journalist must confront is whether the (potential) risks involved are worth the benefits of covering a situation and completing an assignment.

When completing a risk assessment, newsroom managers should be able to answer important questions when assigning stories to staff. Risk assessments should become second nature so that managers develop the habit of considering them for any story that staff members may cover. As the suggested readings below demonstrate, seemingly simple beats or stories have the potential to turn dangerous and create emotional, traumatic experiences for the journalists covering them.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for the newsroom manager to conduct a risk assessment before assigning staff members to cover a story? What is the danger of not doing so?

Most importantly, it is important for the newsroom manager to conduct a risk assessment to ensure that he or she is looking out for safety of the staff. While the primary danger in not

conducting a risk assessment is that staff members may be put in danger, there are other reasons as well. The newsroom manager sets the tone for a healthy, safe work environment by showing that he or she has the staff's best interest in mind. This helps create a culture of safety inside the newsroom. If the newsroom manager does not take safety risks seriously, this can trickle down and create divisions and negatively impact the work environment.

"10 resolutions for newsroom managers in 2018" Jill Geisler, *Columbia Journalism Review* (Jan 2, 2018)

https://www.cjr.org/business_of_news/newsroom-managers-editors-advice.php

Geisler consulted with top news leaders for suggestions on how to develop a strong newsroom. Students should consider how Geisler's list of ten suggestions will benefit the entire team. Be prepared to discuss how these suggestions can work within the newsroom.

Discussion Questions

1. **What suggestions does Jill Geisler offer to help build a strong team in the newsroom? How can these suggestions be implemented in the newsroom? Please list and discuss.**

Have students write down the list of suggestions Geisler offers. In small or large groups, assign specific suggestions for students to examine and report back on.

"Plan for the expected and unexpected: What you need to think about when completing a risk assessment" Caroline Scott, *WAN IFRA: World Association of News Publishers* (June 4, 2019)

<https://blog.wan-ifra.org/2019/06/04/plan-for-the-expected-and-unexpected-what-you-need-to-think-about-when-completing-a-risk->

Completing risk assessments is an essential part of creating a strong, capable newsroom. Covering stories like the Boston Marathon or a concert in Las Vegas can turn dangerous in the blink of an eye. Newsroom managers can set the tone by making sure that risk assessments and safety measures are being taken seriously by all staff members.

Discussion Questions

1. **Besides physical threats, what are some other threats facing journalists? Why are risk assessments considered a necessity?**

Besides being physically threatened, there is also the risk of emotional trauma and threats to digital data and equipment.

2. **What are the tips that Sally Fitton, High Risk Adviser in the BBC High Risk Team, provides for managers and staff to come to grips with risk assessments? Why is this an important part of the preparation? List and discuss.**

- Design an easy-to-follow template
- Identify risk, and put mitigations in place
- Know your team's experience and competency as well as local relationships
- Assess the environment, have a plan, and stick to it
- Process, editorial sign off

"Diversity and Inclusivity in Journalism" *American Press Institute (API)* (2020)

<https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/diversity-programs/>

According to *API*, their "primary goal...is a public information ecosystem (consisting of journalism products and the public's own conversations) that fairly represents, includes and aids varied groups and viewpoints in a community." This involves not only the hiring of diverse employees, but a commitment to the empowerment and retention of diverse employees. Discuss what organizations – including university newsrooms – are doing to promote diversity in the newsroom and encouraging diverse viewpoints.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important that newsrooms make concerted efforts to hire and retain diverse employees? How does this connect to sustainability?

A diverse newsroom has the power to serve whole communities in a more effective, positive way. *API* emphasizes that diversity is both (1) a business imperative and (2) a journalism imperative. From a business perspective, diversity will help reach new audiences, especially the younger generation. From a journalism perspective, diversity will serve and benefit all members of a community. Diverse voices are required to do that.

“Editors’ Checklist: Preparing for U.S. protest assignments” *Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)* (June 8, 2020)

<https://cpj.org/2020/06/editors-checklist-preparing-for-u-s-protest-assignments/>

CPJ Editors’ Checklist includes strategies for selecting staff, completing risk assessments, ensuring equipment and digital security, knowing journalists’ rights, and what to do if stopped by law enforcement.

Discussion Questions

1. What questions should newsroom managers editors consider when assigning stories?

Newsroom managers and editors should consider experience, decision making under pressure, ethnic/gender profile in terms of risk profile, previous knowledge (or access to knowledge) about protest locations, and ensuring no staff works alone, among other things.

2. What other concerns should newsroom managers and editors keep in mind when sending staff out to cover protests?

Newsroom managers and editors should make sure risk assessments are complete, proper equipment (both PPE and equipment for covering the stories) is available, digital security is in place, and awareness of journalists’ rights and how to respond if stopped by law enforcement has been discussed. Safety is paramount. Newsroom managers and editors should also consult *CPJ*’s checklist for covering COVID-19 assignments:

<https://cpj.org/2020/04/editors-checklist-preparing-covid-19-assignments-safety/>

“Are Newsrooms Doing Enough to Take Care of Their Journalists’ Mental Health and Safety?”

Nu Yang, *Editor and Publisher* (Sep 17, 2018)

<https://www.editorandpublisher.com/stories/are-newsrooms-doing-enough-to-take-care-of-their-journalists-mental-health-and-safety,87870>

This article examines the emotional toll journalists can experience. For instance, John Tlumacki had covered the Boston Marathon for two decades when bombings occurred in 2013. Other reporters and editors have covered stories like the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooting, the Las Vegas concert shooting, the Pulse night club shooting, and wildfires in Northern California. Each of these stories took an emotional toll on the journalists that covered them. This article explores the ways managers/editors can support their staff in seeking the help they may require. This resource helps consider and frame what newsrooms are doing to help/watch out for their reporters, camerapeople, photojournalists, etc.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways are journalists similar to first responders (police, firefighters, and paramedics)? Why is it important to realize this?

Journalists are often first on a scene, or the first to uncover previously unknown information. Journalists need to recognize that they may experience the same trauma experienced by police, firefighters, and paramedics and like first responders, they are not immune. This proximity makes journalists and other newsroom employees emotionally vulnerable.

2. Why didn't John Tlumacki attend counseling after the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013? Does he regret that decision? Would you have attended counseling?

Tlumacki notes that some photos were so graphic they have never seen the light of day and still regularly haunt him in his dreams. Even still, he decided not to take advantage of the counseling the *Globe* offered. He felt that since he was not injured himself, he did not have PTSD. In hindsight, Tlumacki said he should have taken advantage of counseling. This is a chance to discuss how students think they would respond in Tlumacki's shoes. Would they seek out counseling? What would they advise other journalists to do?

3. In discussing the 2016 Pulse nightclub mass shooting, editor Julie Anderson mentions the role adrenaline plays in covering a story. What happens when the adrenaline kicks in? What can happen after the adrenaline wears off, and the story is over?

Adrenaline can allow journalists to cover stories without being aware of the trauma they are experiencing. Journalists must take stock of their well-being after the story is over. Newsroom managers can step in and help his or her staff in processing what has transpired.

4. Kent Porter won a Pulitzer for his photojournalism covering fires in California in 2017. In discussing this experience, Porter notes that he felt an "overwhelming sense of anger, grief, depression and anxiety." Why? What steps did Porter take to deal with these emotions? How could a news manager support someone in Porter's situation?

Porter's awareness that this devastation was happening right in his "own backyard" made him feel tremendous anger and sadness even though he had not lost his home. Porter retreated for a few days, turned off the police scanner and spent time with his wife. Porter notes this would have been a good time to gather with the newsroom staff to talk through their experiences. A newsroom manager can help by facilitating this type of intervention for his or her staff.

"Coping with Emotional Trauma in the Newsroom" Kenna Griffin, *Prof KRG: A practical resource for student journalists* (Oct 30, 2014)

<http://www.profkrg.com/preparing-journalists-report-victims>

Kenna Griffin, professor at Oklahoma City University, discusses covering a rape case as a young 21-year-old reporter. Griffin explains this experience led to her involvement with the *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma*. This served as a catalyst to study "the conflict journalists experience when their professional values and their feelings after covering a traumatic story don't align." This post includes specific steps newsroom managers can take to make sure they are meeting the needs of their staff members.

Discussion Questions

1. According to Kenna Griffin, what did journalism school prepare her for? What did it fail to prepare her for? Discuss and compare with student experiences.

Griffin suggests that "journalism school prepared me for things like how to interview sources, construct stories and deal with stealthy government, but it didn't prepare me for the emotions that came along with trauma coverage—emotions reporters are trained not to have or show." Allow students to discuss what they are learning, and what they think they should be learning.

2. Griffin writes, "We're objective, detached professionals. We aren't supposed to feel about the things we cover, but we do." How can journalists balance this idea of being objective and detached while at the same time acknowledging that journalists are simply human and can experience an emotional toll (PTSD)?

Newsroom managers play a key role in this balance by checking in with their staff members before and after a story has been covered. Different journalists may require different ways of

decompressing after covering a beat, and the newsroom manager can help by really getting to know his or her staff, developing healthy relationships, and checking in on them.

3. According to Griffin, what are some strategies that newsroom managers can employ to minimize the risk of emotional harm for staff members? List and discuss.

Talk about it; Allow journalists to opt out; Know your staff; Offer social support; Know the signs of trauma; If you see someone suffering, insist on further help.

“Journalists of Color Face Harassment by Sources” Jane C. Hu, *The Open Notebook* (April 9, 2019) – this article appears in Modules 3, 7, and 11

<https://www.theopennotebook.com/2019/04/09/journalists-of-color-face-harassment-by-sources/>

Hu examines the toll harassment can take on journalists of color by explaining how small microaggressions of racism build up and ultimately wear down those on the receiving end. This article delves into the role that editors and newsrooms can play in supporting journalists of color.

Discussion Questions

1. How are “microaggressions” defined in this article? Is there a clear line between these pinpricks of racism and a source being friendly or cordial?

Microaggressions are “subtle prejudiced comments or actions directed at a member of a marginalized group.” Comments or actions may seem innocuous and, taken individually, may not have an impact, but microaggressions build up even if the source does not intend to offend. Intentional or not, that does not lessen the emotional pain a journalist may feel.

2. How can newsrooms support journalists of color who experience harassment?

Ideally, newsrooms would have protocols in place to deal with all forms of harassment. However, each harassment case is different so there is not a “one-size-fits all” solution. Editors and newsroom managers can start by creating a welcoming environment for all employees. Editors and newsroom managers can also proactively reach out to journalists and encourage them to speak about their experiences in a safe environment. Trust is key.



Module 4: On Assignment – Mitigating Risk

Objective

The goal of this module is to mitigate risk when covering assignments that may result in civil unrest. Instructors should emphasize the importance of conducting pre-assignment risk assessments to mitigate potential dangers. This module has been updated to include resources for covering protests following the killing of George Floyd and the specific targeting of journalists by police officers. In addition, this module contains two scenarios: (1) Aaron Mak of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* covering Milwaukee's 2016 Sherman Park Riots that erupted after the fatal police shooting of a 23-year-old Black male, and (2) Cengiz Yar's experience covering the 2016 Republican National Convention in Cleveland. The 2016 U.S. political conventions had journalists on edge in advance, thinking the anger and fights that had been part of the campaigns might erupt into more intense and widespread violence. Although these fears did not materialize, advance preparations by many news organizations and freelancers were the right approach in preparing to cover civil disobedience-type events that have the potential for violence.

Readings & Scenarios

"The US is now a 'noticeably problematic' place to be a journalist, report shows" Lucy Handley, *CNBC* (April 18, 2019)

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/18/the-us-is-now-a-noticeably-problematic-place-to-be-a-journalist.html>

This article highlights how threats to journalists continue to increase in the United States, making the profession more dangerous. According to this article, the Trump administration fomented aggression towards journalists by making continued accusations of "fake news" and describing the media – individually and collectively – as being "dangerous and sick."

Discussion Questions

1. What are reasons why the US is considered 'noticeably problematic' for journalists?

There was clearly animosity between the Trump administration and the free press, arguably greater than between any previous administration and the press. In addition to this strained relationship, this is an opportunity for students to consider factors that contribute to how the press is perceived. For example, social media and the 24/7 news cycle can create echo chambers for those looking to have their views validated. This leads to a blurring of the line between fact and opinion, and between journalists and TV hosts.

2. How should journalists react to this in terms of how they perform their craft?

Journalism functions best when shining a light on the truth. To argue journalism is not "fake news" is often a losing battle. The pursuit of truth must be done with safety in mind and an awareness that the perception of the press is often outside of journalists' control.

"Covering Injustice: Safety Tips for Reporting on Protests" *International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)* (June 3, 2020)

<https://medium.com/@IWMF/covering-injustice-safety-tips-for-reporting-on-protests-37fe5e791cab>

This short reading provides tips, especially for younger journalists, preparing to cover protests. This includes essentials to bring, how to prepare, what to do when covering the protests, how to respond if stopped by law enforcement, and additional resources.

Discussion Questions

1. Find out if any students have experience covering protests. If so, what precautions did they take? How would they describe the experience?

Discuss risk assessments, especially when potential unrest exists. Students should share experiences and concerns, and discuss preparation, strategy, and available resources.

“It’s time to change the way the media reports on protests. Here are some ideas.” Kendra Pierre-Louis, *Nieman Lab* (June 24, 2020)

<https://www.niemanlab.org/2020/06/its-time-to-change-the-way-the-media-reports-on-protests-here-are-some-ideas/>

Pierre-Louis examines *how* journalists report on protests. One concern from Danielle Kilgo, professor at University of Minnesota, is when “the press contributes to the political status quo by reinforcing whatever the government thinks.” Journalists should recognize inherent biases, the ways protests are framed, how “to hold powerful people and institutions accountable to the broader public”, racial discrimination within newsrooms, and a tendency to report on extreme protests while neglecting peaceful protests.

Discussion Questions

1. How does framing impact the narrative? Why should journalists remain aware of this?

Pierre-Louis provides examples to show why framing is so important. For instance, a study of major newspapers covering over 40 years of protest often depicted the protests as “nuisances rather than as necessary functions of democracy.” In addition, the stories cited the impact on businesses, traffic, etc. instead of focusing on the rights that were being demanded. Pierre-Louis notes that protests “publicize grievances from people who typically exist outside of traditional power structures.” Minimizing protests implicitly benefits the status quo.

2. Why is word choice and passive vs. active voice important?

Again, this goes back to how the story is framed. In the article, Pierre-Louis writes, “You also see this bias in headlines from The Washington Post’s ‘A night of fire and fury across America as protests intensify’ to The New York Times’ ‘Appeals for calm as sprawling protests threaten to spiral out of control.’ These headlines focus exclusively on the violence of the protests. They don’t tell us where the violence is coming from.”

Pierre-Louis writes, “(There’s been little coverage that quantifies the proportion of protests that are violent versus those that are peaceful.)...Calling a protest peaceful suggests that the default is a violent one. Mentioning that a Black man was unarmed suggests that the default is an armed Black man.” Journalists must always be cognizant of the impact their words will have. Instructors and students may consider stories they have written – or are currently writing – to consider their own style when framing stories.

3. What are some other concerns addressed in this article? List and discuss.

Pierre-Louis examines points that can be addressed in the classroom, including racial discrimination in many newsrooms, concerns whether journalists accurately cover the goals of the protests, a tendency to focus on protests that turn violent instead of peaceful protests, clearly identifying instigators of violence, and how issues of race are covered.

“Reporting Safely from Sandy Hook to Ferguson” Yamiche Alcindor, *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma*, (Nov 1, 2015)

<https://dartcenter.org/resources/reporting-safely-sandy-hook-ferguson-0>

Young journalists must recognize that risks are not limited to journalists covering war and conflict. In a 2015 panel hosted by the *Dart Center*, Yamiche Alcindor, who has covered the Sandy Hook school shooting, the Boston Marathon bombing, the death of Trayvon Martin, and protests in both Ferguson and Baltimore, shared tips for young journalists who may find themselves working in high-risk situations. Review and discuss the tips that Alcindor offers to help mitigate danger and protect journalists.

Discussion Question

1. **What are the ten tips that Alcindor offers based on her extensive experience? List and discuss how and why each of these suggestions is important for journalists to consider.**
 - Wear comfortable layered clothing and shoes. Also, have all-weather gear close by.
 - Be respectful and treat people fairly.
 - Have mobile charging options, make sure phone and tablet have enough space to record.
 - Always pack portable snacks and water, pack light but smart.
 - Use your personality to help you. Being real will help you in emergency situations.
 - Join media lists and check Twitter/ Facebook pages of officials connected with the story.
 - Find someone to check in with in your newsroom, Keep in touch with family and friends.

“7 safety tips for on-the-scene journalists” *Muck Rack Blog* (July 8, 2014)

<https://muckrack.com/blog/2014/07/08/7-safety-tips-for-on-the-scene-journalists>

Includes seven steps for journalists to take when seeking out developing stories and giving firsthand accounts of things happening, especially if potentially being in harm’s way to capture the story.

Discussion Question

1. **What are the seven steps mentioned in this article? Why is it important to take these steps when covering developing stories? List and discuss.**

What to carry; First-Aid kit; Be aware of your surroundings; Bring important information; What to wear; Take care of yourself; and Do not work alone

“You’re Asian, Right? Why Are You Even Here?” Aaron Mak, *Politico* (August 23, 2016)

<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/08/milwaukee-protests-asian-american-black-lives-matter-214184>

Aaron Mak, an intern with the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, was attacked while covering Milwaukee’s 2016 Sherman Park riots. Mak describes his experience in this *Politico* article. After reading the article, students should read Mak’s three-part scenario about covering the Sherman Park riots in order to consider how a risk assessment may have helped Mak prepare for this situation as it spiraled into a riot.

Scenario, Three Parts: Aaron Mak Covering the Sherman Park Riots (Milwaukee 2016) from The James W. Foley Journalist Safety Guide.

Part 1

It is Aug. 13, the last day of your summer internship. But your editor has an assignment. He sends you to the city’s predominantly Black and socio-economically underprivileged Sherman Park neighborhood. There had been reports of a fatal shooting in the area. Because you have reported at crime scenes in the past without incident, it seemed like a routine assignment. But when you arrive you learn that the shooter is a policeman and the victim is a well-liked member of the community. An outraged crowd is forming around the cul-de-sac where the homicide occurred. This did not concern you because you had spent much of the summer covering police brutality protests, all of which had been peaceful.

You begin to suspect that the protest could turn violent when some in the crowd start shoving forward and throwing rocks at the police officers who are guarding the crime scene. In demonstrations that you’ve

covered in the past, making any sort of physical contact with law enforcement is usually an unspoken line that protestors won't cross. The police conducted their on-scene investigation throughout the afternoon, during which time the crowd grew progressively larger and more unruly.

Discussion Question for Part 1

1. Should Mak have shadowed an activist?

Activists typically command respect within the communities they represent, so rioters would not likely have attacked if he had an activist vouching for him. Mak was fortunate enough over the course of his earlier reporting to have developed a relationship with the community leaders at the protest, who escorted him out of the area after the attack; they had enough clout to make sure no one else assaulted him as he left. In the future, Mak should remain within earshot of a prominent activist in potentially volatile situations. Mak should have called his editor to develop an emergency plan, but he was too concerned with reporting. He incorrectly assumed that in a riot, he would be safe because he is an Asian American reporter.

Part 2

At sunset, the officers place the body into the ambulance, pile into their squad cars, and begin to leave. Just as the last car in the procession is about to pull out of the cul-de-sac, someone runs up and smashes its back window. This emboldens others in the crowd to follow suit, and soon the rioters are smashing and setting fire to parked vehicles and small businesses that line the streets of the neighborhood. You run after the mob to capture video of the turmoil on your cell phone.

You also call your editor and inform him that a riot has broken out. He sends another reporter and a photographer, both white men, to help with the coverage. You meet them at a nearby intersection. Moments later, a phalanx of armored police comes marching down the street behind us. A rioter fires seven gunshots from the other side of the intersection. The police disperse, and you and your colleagues dive behind a Chevy Suburban. Once it seemed like the gunfire ceased, the photographer walks off to take more pictures, while you and the other reporter remain behind the car.

Minutes later, a man shouts, "Get your white ass out of here! You better not let me fucking catch you!" You see a group of around 20 people chase the photographer down the street. You don't have a plan to diffuse the situation, but feel you can't leave your colleague to fend for himself. You decide to run after him and make sure that he isn't assaulted. It may not have been the right call, but you're not sure what else you can do.

The photographer drops the bulky cameras that are around his neck so that he can run faster. Worried that you'll lose all of his work, you run over to retrieve the gear. He stops and looks back, at which point you yell at him to keep running. You realize that picking up the cameras and shouting at him were ill-considered moves that likely endangered both of you. The mob realizes that you are associated with him, and so they begin chasing you.

Discussion Question for Part 2

1. When the rioting first started, what precautions should Mak have taken to mitigate potential dangers?

Mak should have contacted his editor and spoke with other reporters at the scene to devise an escape plan once he sensed that the protest could spin out of control (i.e., when protestors began making physical contact with police). After he fled the area, Mak still did not know where his colleagues were. Mak should have identified a rendezvous spot in the event reporters were separated, requested that someone sit in a car nearby who could transport him

away from the scene, and created a group chat so that he could communicate with others at the same time. Mak and his colleagues should have stayed together once people started destroying property. Splitting up made it difficult for them to look out for each other, and for his editors to ensure his safety.

Part 3

Because the photographer was a much faster runner, the mob caught up with you first, threw you to the ground and pummeled you. A few onlookers saw what was happening and ran up, yelling, “Stop, he’s not white! He’s Asian!” The attackers, after taking a step back to examine you, run off into the night. An activist who had been a source in earlier reporting on police violence comes over to help you get up from the ground and escorts you to a nearby park. Other people you have interviewed in past protests hear about what happened, and they too come over to make sure you are not attacked again. You call an editor and ask her to pick you up. Your two colleagues also managed to run to safety, unharmed, and you meet back at the newsroom.

Discussion Question for Part 3

- 1. Do you need to think about how a crowd might react to you based on your gender, race or ethnicity? Is that something to consider in assessing risk?**

As a reporter, you may think of yourself as an impartial observer, but that is not necessarily how other people see you. You and other reporters and photographers should consider how your race may affect the way the crowd may view you and react to you.

“Arrests at 2008 RNC in St. Paul” (Video) from *KARE 11*, Minneapolis, MN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BYX9MQaK5A&feature=youtu.be>

In this video from the 2008 Republican National Convention, protesters and journalists are rounded up and arrested. One of the photojournalists covering the event, Jonathan Malat, was held with protesters and journalists before his arrest. Malat and other credentialed journalists were cited for unlawful assembly and then released. This raises concerns about freedom of the press, free speech, and the right to assemble.

Discussion Question

- 1. What steps can journalists take to protect themselves when preparing to cover events, like this protest? In the video, Malat says he was going to keep filming until he was arrested. What rights do journalists have when it comes to covering protests?**

This video provides footage of covering a protest, and can stimulate discussion about the actions taken by the reporter and photojournalist. This highlights some of the safety steps to be aware of like knowing your escape route, being aware of your rights, etc. This video also can serve as a good introduction into Cengiz Yar’s experience at the 2016 RNC in Cleveland.

Biography of Cengiz Yar

Cengiz Yar is a documentary photographer based in the US with a long-term focus on Iraq and ISIS. Yar’s work focuses on mass displacement, religious and ethnic minorities, and the fight against ISIS. Yar has written for *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *Maclean’s Magazine*, *Foreign Policy*, *Huck Magazine*, *The American Scholar*, *Vice*, *Makeshift Magazine*, and *Mashable*. Yar’s humanitarian clients include UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, and Mercy Corps. Yar’s work has also been featured in a variety of other places, including *BBC World News*, *Juxtapoz Magazine* and *Roads & Kingdoms*. In 2015, Cengiz Yar was awarded the *Online News Association’s* inaugural James W. Foley Award for Conflict Freelancers.

Scenario, two parts: [Cengiz Yar Covering the Republican National Convention \(Cleveland 2016\)](#) from *The James W. Foley Journalist Safety Guide*.

Part 1

It is the summer of 2016. You are a freelance photographer and have been assigned to cover the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. Tens of thousands of protesters are predicted to fill the streets, along with thousands of police officers. The anticipation of violence is high with many news outlets reporting on it in the weeks leading up to the July convention. The weather during the convention is supposed to be in the 90s.

The city of Cleveland has a restricted zone in downtown that limits the items allowed near the convention hall. Included in that list are gas masks and tennis balls - not included are guns because Cleveland has a law allowing registered gun owners to carry concealed weapons.

Pro-gun activists from around the country likely will be traveling to Cleveland to exercise their right to carry weapons. Black Lives Matter protesters are heading to the city as well, as are branches of the Black Panthers. Members of Bikers for Trump are riding in from South Dakota and anarchists like Black Bloc are said to be traveling from the East Coast. There is also the possibility of Trump not receiving the Republican nomination, which could lead to violence on the streets from his supporters.

Your editor assigns you to cover the protesters and environment outside the convention hall as well as some Cleveland voices from around the city. You will not have to go into the convention hall to cover the speeches and nominating procedures. You will be outside and mobile on the streets. There will be thousands of other reporters and photographers covering this event so the competition for compelling stories and imagery will be high.

Discussion Questions for Part 1

1. What are the possible threats to your safety?

- Your biggest concern at this point is the use of weapons from either side. Things are likely to get heated due to the presence of opposing groups. Anarchists are certain to take advantage of the situation.
- In such scenarios, you need to be cautious not just of the threat from protesters, but also from law enforcement personnel, lest they mistake you for one of the anarchists. Another cause for concern is the use of nonlethal force by the law enforcers. Always be on the lookout for police activity. If they are putting on gas masks and riot gear, it is best to start making your way to the periphery.
- You will probably be carrying expensive equipment with you, making you a target for opportunists within the crowd. Some of the protesters may be averse to the media and may target you simply for being there. Be on the lookout for any signs of aggression.
- You want to get the best images and footage, but getting too caught up in crowd may drag you into the center and you may not be in the best position to safely evacuate the premises. Always stay on the periphery and know your exit plan.

2. What will you be wearing?

- You will be running around with protesters in an urban environment in the middle of summer. Primary concerns should be staying mobile and cool. Wear lightweight clothing, good solid shoes and jeans.
- The shoes should have hard toes so that you will not be injured if people step on your feet if there are running or fast-moving crowds.
- Wear jeans or sturdy pants when covering protests because they are difficult to rip and add some layer of protection. Shorts also lead to exposed skin in the event of chemical agents. For this reason, pack a long-sleeved shirt in your day pack.

- Bring a T-shirt to change into and some deodorant. Being able to freshen up quickly makes a world of difference and will make you more comfortable and better able to work and face future challenges.
3. **Due to the security restrictions downtown where most of the protesting likely will take place, what might you bring to protect yourself that is different from other protests?**
 - In a protest situation that might result in tear gas, you should bring a gas mask. While gas masks are not allowed in Cleveland, you may still need to protect your eyes and lungs from chemical agents. Yar picked up a pair of swimming goggles and a chemical painting mask and kept them with him for the week.
 - A bike helmet or skateboard helmet is also a lightweight piece of protection to strap to your bag just in case rocks start flying. You can also buy a helmet that looks like a baseball cap but is hard enough to protect your head; make sure it has straps under your chin so it does not fall off.
 4. **Should you bring body armor?**
 - Some journalists wore body armor and others brought it. Wearing body armor makes you stand out as a target. You will stand out to both the police and to the protesters and, as a photographer, it is better to blend in. Body armor also adds to the expectations of danger.
 - Wear body armor when you are covering a war, but not in a situation where it will make people more fearful or as a way to showboat. Body armor is not a joke and should be worn seriously and in serious situations.
 5. **What should you discuss with your editor?**
 - Be sure to get an assignment letter stating that you are working for the news organization so that you can get credentials. Credentials come from the House Press Gallery.
 - Make sure you have a list of lawyers in case you are arrested.
 - As with any possibly hostile situation and assignment, you should have a detailed check-in plan with your editor, a risk assessment, and a trusted contact person.
 6. **What other preparations could you make?**
 - Pack water, a press pass, candy bar, protein bar, and medical kit
 - Have plenty of whatever medicine you normally take
 - Cash: Always carry around hard money
 - Travel as lightly as possible to be able to move more easily and last longer in the field
 - Create meeting places with other journalists and buddy-up. If you feel like situations are getting out of hand, pair up with someone and watch each other's back.

Part 2

It is the second day of the Republican National Convention in downtown Cleveland. The events so far have not been violent, crowds are small, there is a mass gathering of journalists and thousands of police. It is the middle of the day, and you're extremely hot. A crowd of police and journalists surround a group of men arguing. A scuffle breaks out and you are stuck between the police and protesters, including the men who are arguing. There is shoving.

Some small objects, most likely plastic bottles, are thrown through the air. The confrontation appears to be between masked anarchistic protestors and InfoWars, the conservative gun rights group.

You have seen people with handguns on their hips in the crowd and others earlier in the day walking around with rifles. The police, of course, are armed, and there are police snipers in nearby buildings. The situation appears to be escalating quickly.

Discussion Questions for Part 2

1. What do you do, stay in the crowd or move? What gets you the best photos?

Yar backed up and allowed the other journalists to surround the scene. He determined that he did not need close-up action shots for his story and being able to observe the melee from a short distance worked as long as he could maintain a view of the action. He stayed close enough that he could get back into the scrum if he felt it was warranted.

2. How did you prepare for the day's work? Did you have a safety as well as a photography/storytelling plan?

Preparation is key. No matter the assignment, what makes the job easier and more efficient is essential groundwork. Having a pre-ordained plan not only allows you to focus better, it helps alleviate many of the risks carried by certain assignments. The Rory Peck Trust offers the following template on drafting an assignment outline even before journalists assess the risks:

- **Create an outline**

To identify risks, properly outline your project. Identify and list the key building blocks: sequences, interviews, travel plans and actions that are vital to your plans.

- **Locations and brief schedule**

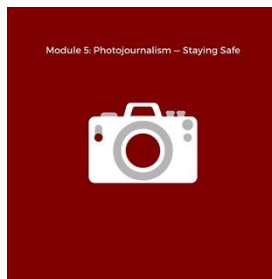
Where are you going, when and for how long?

- **Assignment details**

Give details of what you intend to cover. What will you film, photograph, record, write? Include meetings, sequences, interviews and locations. This is the foundation of a risk assessment. This gives a clear idea of what and how to achieve your goals.

- **Project-specific risks**

Is this a sensitive topic? Are you reporting in a high-risk location/event? Are the people you are meeting under surveillance? Might they be put at risk if they talk to you? What could you do to mitigate risks? For instance, could you leave sensitive interviews until the end of your visit so they are less likely to affect your plans?



*** Module 5: Photojournalism – Staying Safe (Added May 3, 2021)

Objective

This module focuses specifically on the safety of photojournalists. There's no question that working as a photojournalist can be dangerous. In order to capture images of people, disasters, protests, riots, and other events in real time, photojournalists often put themselves in risky situations where the subject and conditions can change in an instant. By nature of the profession, photojournalists may have limited peripheral vision and be less aware of changes taking place around them. Therefore, photojournalists must be intentional to mitigate potential risks and avoid equipment damage. In addition, photojournalists have multiple responsibilities: themselves, their subjects, and their equipment.

Readings/Resources

"Video & recap: Caring for photojournalists – Preventing burnout, treating trauma and ensuring equity" *Journal Institute, The National Press Club* (Jan 22, 2021 – updated March 2, 2021)

<https://www.pressclubinstitute.org/event/caring-for-photojournalists-preventing-burnout-treating-trauma-and-ensuring-equity/>

This panel about photojournalist burnout and trauma includes Nicole Frugé, director of photography at the San Francisco Chronicle, Rich Glickstein, a recovering photojournalist, trauma therapist and social worker, and Michael Santiago, staff news photojournalist at Getty Images. They offer tips on preventing burnout, treating trauma, and ensuring equity. Ensuring equity for photojournalists is another topic addressed by this panel. A video of their discussion is included at the end.

Discussion Questions

1. What can photojournalists do to prevent burnout and protect their mental well-being?

To prevent burnout, journalists can practice mindfulness and build awareness. Look for signs of fatigue, reduced care in details, heightened callousness when interacting, and not feeling heard. When treating trauma, Santiago says it is OK to feel fear and be mindful of emotions: "If you go into a situation and don't acknowledge that fear, that's when you can get hurt."

4. Why is the issue of equity important when considering the role of photojournalists?

Photojournalists may feel they are not equal partners in the storytelling process or perhaps not viewed or treated as equals by their colleagues. Frugé notes that "we all have to be equals in the process of pitching and originating stories." The goal is to establish a collaborative atmosphere in the newsroom and in the field.

"Photojournalism best practices during COVID-19" *International Journalists' Network (IJNET)* (August 25, 2020)

<https://ijnet.org/en/story/photojournalism-best-practices-during-covid-19>

This article includes advice about safety best practices, general information for photojournalists during the pandemic, tips for journalists and press organizations, and photography best practices.

Discussion Questions

1. What safety best practices should photojournalists consider to ensure their safety and wellbeing during the pandemic? List and discuss.

Students and instructors should work through the list of best practices, including, but not limited to the following: Reduce time spent reporting on-site; Sterilize photography

equipment; Stay up to date on the latest studies, research, news and information about COVID; Plan for all potential risks (complete a risk assessment) and develop an emergency plan; Use long focal length lenses, or telephoto lenses.

2. **What specific photography best practices should photojournalists follow? List and discuss – students and instructors may have varied opinions on these best practices.**
 - Take photos of your subjects in a way that protects their identity, privacy and dignity.
 - Focus on depicting stories and topics that help inform people.
 - Avoid photographing scenes that show people with difficult health conditions. These shots may cause people to panic, and could make them anxious and fearful.
 - Pay particular attention to photographing medical teams that provide their services to people during the pandemic.
 - Don't hesitate to inform your employer if you are feeling ill.

“Photojournalists: The key to getting published and staying safe” Glenn Edwards, *Thomson Foundation* (2021)

<https://www.thomsonfoundation.org/latest/photojournalists-the-key-to-getting-published-and-staying-safe/>

In this resource, Glenn Edwards, an award-winning photojournalist, shares his experience as a photojournalist, mostly covering events in Africa. Many of his assignments have included covering protests and most recently he has been photographing the Black Lives Matters demonstrations in his native Wales. Edwards talks about how to get work, what to do once you get an assignment, and safety protocols you should follow when on the job. In his post, Edwards responds to a series of questions that photojournalists should consider

Discussion Questions

1. **Edwards addresses the following: Whether a demonstration is at home or in another country, if you don't know the details of the story, and reasons behind the protests, how can you convey this in your photographs?**

The first part of his advice is to better understand surroundings and learn about the conflicts or protests of the region. This will inform decisions regarding how to approach a situation, what to wear on location, and how to behave. Before embarking on an assignment that will involve expenditure, think about the cost implications and how to sell the work. This will also be a part of the risk assessment. Edwards also notes that a demonstration can start peacefully and then quickly turn violent so photojournalists need to be prepared physically, mentally, and logistically. If new to photojournalism, Edwards says to look and learn from experienced people. Most experienced photographers will help with advice.

2. **Next, Edwards considers the following: Why are you going? Who are you there for? This should lead to a wide-ranging discussion.**

There are a number of issues that students should consider before covering events. This can include money, equipment needed, ethics/responsibilities, press accreditation, and more. This is a reminder that photojournalists should put some thought into pre-assignment work as opposed to simply rushing off to each event.

3. **Finally, when it comes to safety (risk assessment and equipment safety), what questions should photojournalists be prepared to answer? List and discuss.**

- Do I know enough about where I am going?
- What are the potential risks?
- How well prepared am I?

- How will I keep in contact with family and picture desks?
- Are phone and internet connection good enough?
- How will I send my pictures?
- Am I physically and psychologically ready?
- Do I really want to cover the story?

“#SafetyInFocus: Photojournalists at risk” *Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)*

<https://cpj.org/campaigns/safety-focus-photojournalist-security/>

This resource includes six short videos (2-3 minutes each) on the risks of being a photojournalist. Each video covers a different topic: personal safety, financial safety, injury and trauma, sexual harassment, digital security, and risk assessment. This resource also includes statistics from 500 photojournalists who were surveyed about safety.

Discussion Question

1. **Students and instructors can watch the brief videos in class (or as an assignment) and then discuss. Why are each of these topics important for photojournalists to consider? How will addressing these issues provide photojournalists with another level of safety?**

Answers will vary.

“‘We face a different danger,’ war photographer Paul Conroy says” Lucy Westcott/CPJ James W. Foley Fellow, *Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)* (May 22, 2019)

<https://cpj.org/2019/05/paul-conroy-photojournalist-safety-syria-under-the-wire/>

In this interview, British war photographer Paul Conroy recounts his last assignment with reporter Marie Colvin in Syria in 2012. Conroy discusses the biggest issues for photojournalists and their safety, what safety training they receive, if any, and what needs to be done to better support photojournalists. Conroy talks about how the safety of journalists and photojournalists has changed since 2012 and what he does to protect himself while on assignment.

Discussion

1. **Paul Conroy addresses several important questions. List the questions and discuss Conroy’s response.**

- What are the biggest issues for photographers and their safety?
- What safety training did you receive? If you were starting over, would you like or need different training?
- How has the landscape for photographer’s safety changed over the past few years, especially after the high-profile deaths of Western journalists such as Marie Colvin, James Foley, and Steven Sotloff?
- Do you think photographers are well-equipped against digital threats, and how can photographers improve safety in this area?
- What needs to be done to ensure better safety for photographers?
- Finally, can you take us through the steps you take to protect your safety when on assignment?

“When Should Journalists Put Down the Mic and Lend Aid?” Patrick L. Plaisance, *Psychology Today* (Sept 7, 2017)

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/virtue-in-the-media-world/201709/when-should-journalists-put-down-the-mic-and-lend-aid>

This article was written after questions arose about photojournalists responsibility in the aftermath of Hurricane Henry. As the article notes, “Most journalists are loathe [sic] to become part of the story

they're covering, and for good reason: adhering to the role of impartial observer is usually a critical component of the notion of journalistic credibility. Bearing witness is a moral imperative deeply embedded in journalistic DNA. And yet it is often not so simple. Stepping out of one's role should not be taken lightly, of course. At the same time, the value of that role may be outweighed by circumstances in which others might face imminent danger where the journalist can safely provide aid." Students and instructors should address this issue as this is likely to be a dilemma many will confront in their careers.

Discussion Questions

1. What is a journalist's responsibility when covering stories?

In small groups, have students respond to the following: "During a civil rights march in the early 1960s in Selma, Alabama, a photographer for Life magazine witnessed sheriff's deputies shoving children to the ground. The photographer stopped taking photos and went to help the children. Later, Martin Luther King Jr. heard about the incident and spoke with the photojournalist. 'The world doesn't know this happened, because you didn't photograph it,' he said. 'I'm not being cold-blooded about it, but it is so much more important for you to take a picture of us getting beaten up than for you to be another person joining in the fray.'

2. What are the three guidelines that media researcher Roger Simpson offers? List and discuss. Do students agree with Simpson?

- Intervene when first on the scene, others can be helped, and you know how to help.
- Do not intervene in situations in which you might endanger a life, including your own.
- Understand that holding the camera or recording what you see and hear may be the most effective way of intervening.

"Safety Tips for Travel Photographers (Particularly Women)" Karthika Gupta, *Digital Photography School* (2021)

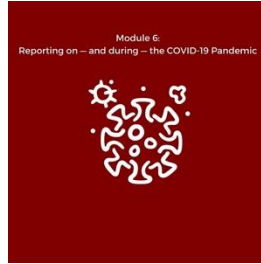
<https://digital-photography-school.com/safety-tips-for-travel-photographers-particularly-women/>

Tips in this article include doing research before traveling, insuring camera gear and other equipment, and keeping an updated itinerary with friends and family. Another important tip is to blend in as much as possible. Looking like a tourist and a photographer is not helpful. Dress like the locals and have a plan for where to go ahead of time so as to not look out of place. Other pieces of advice are to trust instincts (being safe is more important than a photo opportunity) and to carry personal protection equipment like pepper spray or a Swiss army knife.

Discussion Questions

1. What safety measures can – and should – photojournalists (particularly women – though Gupta notes these measures apply to men as well) take? List and discuss.

- Research, research and then do more research
- Keep a record of and insure your gear
- Blend in as much as you can
- Keep an updated itinerary with family and friends at all times
- Plan for emergencies
- Listen to your gut
- Carry only the essentials, including personal protection equipment (PPE)



Module 6: Reporting on – and during – the COVID-19 Pandemic

Objective

This module provides instructors and students with information and strategies for staying safe – physically and mentally – during this crisis. Journalists reporting during the pandemic must make sure they take precautions to protect themselves, their colleagues, and their sources. Knowledge of the coronavirus continues to evolve so staying informed with current resources is of paramount importance. Covering health-related crises presents risks for journalists. Journalists should remain informed on updated information about the coronavirus while also drawing upon past health crises to develop action plans. Journalists must take steps to mitigate risk as nothing is more important than staying physically and mentally healthy. There are additional concerns regarding the effect the pandemic is having on journalism, including how many journalists are working from home and newsrooms are virtually empty. As journalists find themselves spending more time secluded indoors filing stories, this raises concerns about digital safety. This module offers resources for journalists adjusting to this ‘new’ normal.

Readings/Resources

“CPJ Safety Advisory: Covering the coronavirus outbreak” *Committee to Protect Journalists*
(April 28, 2020 – regularly updated)

<https://cpj.org/2020/02/cpj-safety-advisory-covering-the-coronavirus-outbr.php>

CPJ offers this very thorough and easy to digest resource with information and advice for journalists for every step when covering stories during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a versatile resource for introducing journalists to various aspects of reporting during this – or any – health-related crisis. The resource includes information on the following: (1) Pre-Assignment Planning; (2) Psychological Well-Being; (3) Avoiding Infection and Infecting Others; (4) Digital Security; (5) Crime and Physical Security on Assignment; (6) International Travel Assignments; and (7) Post-Assignment. Depending on the daily lesson in class, this resource could be used in a single class period or spread about to complement the material covered over several class meetings. CPJ’s “Safety Kit for Journalists”: <https://cpj.org/safety-kit/>

Discussion Questions

1. When preparing to cover stories during this pandemic, what are steps that journalists can take to mitigate risk, including protecting their mental well-being?

Assignments can change or be cancelled at a moment’s notice. Journalists must prepare for that. When possible, phone or online interviews should be conducted. Older or health-compromised journalists must weigh risk of exposure, and journalists of Asian ethnicity must consider the risks of being targeted. Plans should be in place if a journalist falls ill. To ease concerns, discuss with family and friends why this work is important *despite* the risks.

2. What precautions can journalists take to avoid infection and infecting others?

Journalists should be aware of hygiene measures in place in the location they are reporting from. Journalists should review and understand the following: (1) standard recommendations

to avoid infection, (2) how to avoid transmitting the virus with their equipment, and (3) how to properly use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including face masks.

3. Why should journalists be particularly aware of digital security during this pandemic?

Digital security threats have increased. Journalists may encounter more online hostility, governments may use increased surveillance to track the virus, and criminal hackers may be targeting journalists with sophisticated phishing attacks. Journalists should exercise caution when opening links with information on COVID-19 and when using social media.

4. Is there increased risk of crime and concern for physical security during the pandemic?

There is an increased risk of social unrest with more people out of work and struggling to provide. Many urban areas are deserted, and police resources are often stretched thin. In rural areas, there may be a fear of ‘outsiders.’ Journalists should make an intentional effort to know areas they are reporting from, especially those on international travel assignments.

5. What post-assignment precautions should journalists be prepared to take?

Journalists should continue to monitor their own health while being prepared to self-quarantine after reporting from the field. CPJ recommends journalists keep a journal of all people they come into contact with for 14 days after working on assignment. If symptoms develop, inform the management/newsroom team and find safe passage to a hospital or medical clinic. Be sure to follow [WHO](#) or [CDC](#) guidelines.

“Media ethics, safety and mental health: reporting in the time of Covid-19” Hannah Storm, Director, *Ethical Journalism Network (EJN)* (March 19, 2020)

<https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/media-ethics-safety-and-mental-health-reporting-in-the-time-of-covid-19/amp>

EJN Director Hannah Storm explains how the pandemic is causing newsrooms and journalists to change decades of work habits to cover COVID. Storm notes “nothing compares with the events of recent weeks in terms of the global impact on media around the world of Covid-19 and the unprecedented scale of the story, and the demands it is making on our journalism and on us as journalists.” Storm offers advice about the importance of responsible and ethical reporting of the pandemic, strategies for how journalists can stay safe, and tips for managing mental health.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for journalists to practice core principles of journalism, including truth and accuracy, fairness and impartiality, accountability, and independence?

This may seem like common sense, but instructors are encouraged to lead a class discussion on Storm’s suggestions and consider why these suggestions are increasingly important due to the havoc being wreaked by the pandemic. Storm emphasizes the following:

- Avoid sensationalism and scaremongering
- Avoid racial profiling; Protect affected people
- Be accurate and report facts; Seek expert opinions
- Provide context; Point people to credible information sources and resources
- **First Draft News** also compiled this helpful list: <https://firstdraftnews.org/long-form-article/coronavirus-responsible-reporting-and-ethics/>

2. What steps can journalists take to protect themselves while working during COVID?

Journalists must monitor physical health and, if experiencing symptoms, inform the newsroom manager. Journalists should perform risk assessments and make sure they have the

necessary safety equipment needed. Journalists should have contingency plans should they become ill or are unable to leave the area in which they are working.

3. How can journalists manage their mental health when covering the pandemic?

Storm explains that during this stressful time, it is important for journalists to acknowledge they fill an important role. Reporters are essential and that means that reporters must make sure that they remain healthy. Storm suggests all journalists complete the following exercise: make a list of the things you can and cannot control. This should lead to a robust classroom discussion. Storm suggests journalists can exert control by doing the following:

- Get enough sleep; Eat properly; Avoid excessive alcohol and caffeine
- Take breaks from work, digitally and physically; Switch off news/social media
- It is normal to feel affected by difficult images or stories
- Go for a walk, if able; If you cannot get outside, consider something else to give yourself a break; Try meditation or mindfulness; Watch a comedy or read a book
- Spend time with family and friends, even remotely; Isolation is difficult
- Take time off: if you feel unwell, mentally or physically, do not be afraid to ask.
- Newsroom managers – lead by example. Be clear about policies and priorities; be as transparent as you can; be aware of those who may be more vulnerable

“U.S. video journalist shares tips for covering COVID-19: ‘We have to get creative’” Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) (April 2, 2020)

<https://cpj.org/blog/2020/04/us-video-journalist-shares-tips-for-covering-covid.php>

Jon Gerberg, a veteran video journalist with experience reporting on conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, is currently reporting from New York City. Gerberg examines changes he has observed, precautions he takes, obstacles and concerns when covering current stories, apps for ensuring digital security, and how to deal with misinformation about the coronavirus. Discussing this resource will help journalists gain a greater understanding about how to incorporate safety into their reporting.

Discussion Questions

1. What impact has the pandemic had on covering regular beats?

Engage students in understanding the pandemic will most likely inform the reporting they do, regardless. Gerberg notes he has had to reconsider long-term projects and believes that this pandemic will be the primary story for a long time. From that perspective, this is a good time to impress upon young journalists the importance of adapting on the fly. Gerberg also points out how much he relies on Slack and video conferences to engage editors and colleagues.

2. What safety measures should journalists take when reporting during the pandemic?

Journalists must take risk assessments seriously (see page 71). Journalists must honestly assess whether the risks of covering the story are worth the potential rewards. If the answer is yes, then take these practical steps: choose the right equipment, wear proper PPE gear, maintain social distancing, wipe down all gear, etc. After completing daily assignments, remove clothing and put it directly in the laundry. Protect yourself and others.

3. How can journalists protect their communications?

Gerberg mentions the use of encrypted communication tools, like Signal, and making sure to use PGP encryption and Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to provide digital security. Whether experts on digital security or not, instructors and students should be willing and able to discuss this topic since so much reporting is conducted remotely.

4. What responsibility do journalists have when dealing with misinformation during the pandemic?

Gerberg writes, “Since most of us are not [his italics] epidemiologists or medical professionals, we have to be honest with ourselves and our audience about what we do and do not know.” Students should be prepared to discuss what they are comfortable reporting on and what they feel is beyond their grasp due to the medical and scientific nature of the virus. This type of assessment will prevent journalists from making unnecessary mistakes.

“Reporting on coronavirus: Handling sensitive remote interviews” Jo Healey, *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma* (originally published by *BBC Academy*) (April 20, 2020)

<https://dartcenter.org/resources/reporting-coronavirus-handling-sensitive-remote-interviews>

Jo Healey, senior BBC news journalist, develops and delivers Trauma Reporting through the BBC Academy. In this resource, Healey explains why there are “added considerations” beyond the typical sensitivities when remotely interviewing those impacted by the coronavirus. Healey notes that interviewees may be in isolation or semi-isolation, they may have lost someone who died alone, the ‘normal ritual’ of death and mourning has been altered, there is still so much unknown about the virus, and anxiety and fear about the safety of other loved ones may still exist. Because of all these potential factors, Healey suggests that reporters provide extra support before, during, and after the interview.

Discussion Questions

1. What can journalists do before a remote interview?

Some of the tips Healey suggest include the following: acknowledge the grief of the victim, be as clear and honest about your intentions as possible, check facts carefully as inaccuracy can cause distress, build rapport and make sure the interview is about them not you, and avoid assuming that there is a way victims should respond.

2. What should journalists consider when choosing the right technology to use when conducting a remote interview?

Be sure to carefully explain the technology that will be used as different people have different comfort levels and expertise when it comes to technology. If possible, conduct the interview in a quiet spot. Journalists should try to make sure the interviewee can see as well as hear. Using empathetic body language can provide comfort during the interview. Avoid any distracting images.

3. What should journalists keep in mind during the interview?

Use short, simple questions and remember that the goal is to hear the interviewees account, not hold them to account. Avoid asking ‘how do you feel’ or saying that ‘I know how you feel’: journalists are not in their presence to provide comfort and can’t be sure what the interviewees feel so this may come across as insensitive. Structure the interview to make sure to guide them out of traumatic memories and allow space and control if the interviewee becomes emotional.

4. What responsibilities do journalists have after the interview concludes?

After concluding the interview, journalists should manage expectations and be clear as to how the interview will be used. Be sure to show gratefulness, including not quickly wrapping up after the interview. Interviewees may feel vulnerable after opening up – journalists should be reassuring and contact them to follow up when the piece is broadcast or published. Lastly, journalists must recognize that they are being exposed to trauma and should talk through their experiences with someone they trust.

“How Journalists Can Deal with Trauma While Reporting on COVID-19” Olga Simanovych, *Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)* (March 24, 2020)

<https://gijn.org/2020/03/24/how-journalists-can-deal-with-trauma-while-reporting-on-covid-19/>

This resource examines the delicate balance journalists face in causing no additional harm to victims while also remaining focused on their own mental well-being. Dr. Cait McMahon, director of Dart Center Asia Pacific, reminds journalists of the following: “During a natural disaster or outbreak of violence, a journalist — like a psychotherapist — often takes on the role of a witness, who at times may experience a horror, rage and despair that is almost like that of the victim’s.” In the process, a journalist “risks psychological harm at three different stages of his or her work: firstly, as a witness or participant in the event; secondly, while communicating and showing compassion to the victims; and thirdly, by telling their stories — allowing their experiences to pass through the reporter to an audience.” Instructors can assign this resource to help prepare journalists for covering all three stages – before, during, and after – of an assignment to better understand why developing a strategy for their own mental health is so important.

Discussion Questions

1. What can journalists do to prepare for covering an assignment during this pandemic?

A risk assessment is a great starting point (see page 71). Instructors should stress the importance of having an action plan in place. From there, emphasis should be placed on making sure that journalists plan times when they can step back from the story, including putting away their work and their devices before retiring for the night. This can also be a good time to make sure that journalists identify their own limits – physically, mentally, and psychologically – when reporting during this pandemic. Dr. McMahon includes a checklist for evaluating psychological risk that we strongly encourage all journalists complete. Perhaps most importantly, Dr. McMahon suggests that journalists do the following: “Pursue attainable victories – both personal and professional.” Journalists must not be too hard on themselves. These are extraordinary times.

2. What do journalists need to know about their behavior, and the behavior of others during the pandemic?

This is a chance to discuss what is expected and what is possible when reporting during the pandemic. For instance, Dr. McMahon notes that eye contact can be extremely important when physical distance is required. On top of that, students need to prepare for the fact that the trauma involved with this pandemic will impact how they respond. Remember, it is normal to feel anxious and in distress. Students should know that it will be normal to need to take a step back, to leave a room, to catch their breath. And it will most likely be the same for their sources. These unprecedented times will result in unexpected behaviors.

3. What can journalists do to protect themselves after completing an assignment?

Besides checking for symptoms of COVID, journalists should look for signs of anxiety, confusion, shame/guilt, and desperation, among others. Covering stories can be traumatizing, and journalists *must* make time for themselves. Be sure to go over strategies that Dr. McMahon offers, e.g., do not rush to transcribe, vary story angles, support each other, and take time to think over responses.

“Covering COVID-19: Concepts, sources, treatments, and more” Aldana Vales, *International Journalists’ Network (IJN)* (April 3, 2020)

<https://ijn.net.org/en/story/covering-covid-19-concepts-sources-treatments-and-more>

Typically, a health crisis would be covered by journalists well-versed in science; however, due to the wide-reaching impact of this crisis, most journalists, regardless of their beat, are reporting on the pandemic. In this article, science journalist Aldana Vales provides tips so reporters can “familiarize[e]

themselves with new concepts, sources and data.” Vales briefly explains key concepts, offers advice on incorporating testimonials, and examines ethical dilemmas that should lead to robust discussion about the role of journalists when covering stories during the pandemic. **Note:** Here are additional resources about covering the pandemic: <https://ijnet.org/en/stories#story:7100>

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for journalists to understand key concepts about COVID?

The pandemic is influencing the way all stories are covered – and read. Even though most journalists will not have scientific expertise, they must be increasingly aware and careful of the terminology used in their stories. This will prevent the spread of misinformation.

2. Why should journalists be aware of how they incorporate testimonials of those with first-hand experience of COVID?

The goal around the world is to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. Journalists must be sure they do not weaken the public health interventions currently being implemented to slow the pandemic. For instance, certain stories may provide undue optimism for the public – journalists must do their due diligence to make sure that optimism is warranted. In the same vein, journalists should be careful not to create further panic.

“How journalists can work from home securely” *Freedom of the Press Foundation* (March 18, 2020)

<https://freedom.press/training/blog/wfh-securely/>

The pandemic is making remote work necessary. With so much work taking place outside the newsroom, there must be increased awareness about the importance of digital security. This resource examines systemic changes journalism faces while focusing on the importance of digital safety for newsrooms and for individuals working from home. Instructors can utilize this resource to help newsroom managers and editors understand basic infrastructure needs and to offer reporters tips on digital security.

Discussion Questions

1. What can newsroom managers and editors do to help ensure digital security?

Instructors should go through the list of steps newsroom managers and editors can take to build an infrastructure that protects the digital security of the team. This includes having Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), a team-friendly password manager, and two-factor authentication for shared accounts.

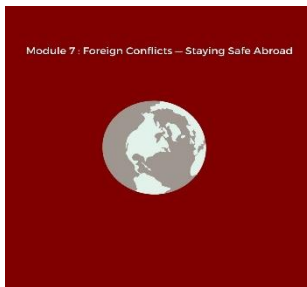
2. With much, or all, of reporting taking place without the benefit of a newsroom, what precautions can journalists take to protect their equipment and their stories?

With journalists almost exclusively working remotely, there is an increased need to put digital security efforts in place. A number of important steps for instructors and students to consider are addressed, including following IT guidance, bringing inventory items home, tightening wireless security, updating connected devices, watching out for phishing attacks, shutting down devices not in use, and sharing resources with colleagues.

Additional COVID-19 Resources

<https://jamesfoleyfoundation.org/journalist-resources-reporting-on-and-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

These resources can supplement and/or replace those resources listed above.



Module 7: Foreign Conflicts – Staying Safe Abroad

Objective

The purpose of this module is to prepare students who have an interest in reporting abroad, particularly in conflict zones. Students will learn about the various risk assessment strategies, tools and applications that have been created to help while they are in the field reporting. This includes ways of thinking about what types of conflicts they feel capable of covering. For many newly minted journalists, freelancing abroad may be a way to start their career as a foreign correspondent as opposed to finding work with an organization that will eventually send them overseas. This module, gleaned from the James W. Foley Journalist Safety Guide, examines some of the realities on the ground, ways to prepare for such a career, and how to build a career as a foreign correspondent in a sensible and safe manner.

Readings/Resources

Jim: The James Foley Story (2016), HBO, Director: Brian Oakes

This documentary created by Brian Oakes, a childhood friend of James Foley, looks at Jim's life from small-town New Hampshire to the frontlines in Libya and Syria. Oakes examines Jim's motivations for reporting from the front lines as well as his desire to return to conflict reporting after being abducted and detained in Libya. For this module, instructors may consider showing the first half of the documentary, which concludes with Jim's abduction in Syria, or watch the documentary in its entirety. (*Jim: The James Foley Story is available on HBO and Amazon*).

Discussion Questions

1. **What preparations should be taken before going to a combat zone, an area of violent civil unrest, or other dangerous situations? Identify how to mitigate risks.**

Instructors should stress that adequate preparation is key and provide some sense of the scope of training that reporters need before working in a combat zone. This includes, but is not limited to, seeking advice from experienced reporters, securing safety equipment, acquiring any necessary travel documents, knowing demographics and cultures, becoming familiar with the language and laws, obtaining insurance, etc. Reporting from conflict zones will undoubtedly bring risk. Journalists must mitigate as many risks as possible by completing a risk assessment that considers the risk/reward of pursuing stories in dangerous locales.

2. **Thinking about James Foley's motivations for reporting from Libya and Syria, how do they resonate with students' motivations to become foreign correspondents?**

Understanding why James Foley went to Libya and Syria helps highlight realities faced by conflict reporters. Both lifestyle and risk are different. Discussion questions should help put students inside the psyche of someone going to the frontline. Students should understand that each conflict area is unique and that conflict reporting is not a uniform experience.

Foley went to Libya with a desire to give voice to those without one. After his release from Libya, he said it was not worth putting friends and family through the stress of getting kidnapped. Despite protests from friends and family, Jim headed back to Libya after a few months and eventually moved on to Syria, saying it was something he felt he had to do.

This provides an opportunity to bring up the lure of reporting on crucial issues in dangerous situations, the adrenaline rush that journalists in the documentary describe, the feeling that providing information from war-torn areas is important and meaningful, and how those emotions must be weighed against risks and responsibilities to family.

3. What are “black holes” in reporting and what consequences can result?

This is very much a purpose-of-journalism question. If Syria is too dangerous for journalists on the ground, the threat of a news “black hole” – or absence of first-hand, authenticated information – is a very real possibility. Comparing Syria to other countries where a free media does not exist will help students think about the importance of newsgathering in these environments. Without independent journalists on the ground, reliable information is hard to gather to allow for good decision making and an informed citizenry. As part of this discussion, students should consider what other areas of the world may be “black holes.”

“The Principles: We Must Embed a Culture of Safety in Our Profession” *ACOS Alliance*

<https://www.acosalliance.org/the-principles>

A Culture of Safety Alliance (ACOS) was formed in January 2015 at a freelance journalism safety conference in Washington. The goal of ACOS is to encourage the news industry to protect the journalists it hires, both staff and freelancers, and to encourage journalists to learn best practices in protecting themselves on assignment. The “Freelance Journalists Safety Principles” were launched in February 2015.

Discussion Questions

1. What principles and practices should journalists, particularly freelancers, follow to mitigate dangers? List and discuss.

- Have basic skills to care for themselves and/or injured colleagues.
- Complete a first aid course, carry a first-aid kit and stay up to date on standards of care and safety, both physical and psychological. Journalists should have medical insurance.
- Have protective ballistic clothing, including armored jackets and helmets. Complete an industry-recognized hostile environment course.
- Work with colleagues on the ground and with news organizations to complete a careful risk assessment and measure the journalistic value of an assignment against the risks.
- Plan and prepare in detail routes, transport, contacts and a communications strategy with daily check-in routines. Secure digital communications from intrusion and tracking.
- Understand the risks of any specific assignment. Consider the safety information and travel advice of professional colleagues, local contacts, embassies and security personnel. Share safety information with colleagues to help prevent them harm.
- Leave next of kin details with news organizations, ensuring that these named contacts have clear instructions and action plans in the case of injury, kidnap or death in the field.

2. What principles and practices should editors and news organizations follow to help protect journalists, particularly freelancers? List and discuss.

- Recognize local journalists and freelancers, including photographers and videographers, play a vital role in international coverage, particularly on dangerous stories.
- Show the same concern for local journalists and freelancers that they do for staffers.
- Treat journalists and freelancers similarly to how they treat staffers in issues of safety training, first aid, safety equipment, and responsibility in event of injury or kidnap.
- Be aware of, and factor in, costs of training, insurance and safety equipment. Before an assignment, determine what a freelancer will be paid and what expenses will be covered.

- Recognize the importance of prompt payment for freelancers. When setting assignments, provide agreed upon expenses in advance, or as soon as possible upon completion of work, and pay for work done in as timely a manner as possible.
- Ensure all freelance journalists are given fair recognition in bylines and credit for work they do unless the news organization and the freelancer agree that crediting the journalist can compromise the safety of the freelancer and/or the freelancer's family.

“A Field Guide for Correspondents” Charles Sennott, *The GroundTruth Project* (Oct 8, 2015)

<http://thegroundtruthproject.org/the-field-guide/>

Charlie Sennott, founder and executive director of *The GroundTruth Project* as well as friend and colleague of James Foley, describes the importance of “ground truth” when it comes to reporting. Sennott discusses how this is both an exciting and dangerous time to be a journalist overseas. It is suggested that both instructors and students download “A Field Guide for Correspondents” to use as a resource when planning to work in dangerous areas here or abroad.

Discussion Questions

1. **In terms of journalism, what does Charles Sennott mean by the term “ground truth”? What is this type of truth necessary for a free press? Discuss.**

According to Sennott, “ground truth” is an example of solid journalism resulting from being there, on the ground, to tell the stories that matter. And even though there is much peril and instability for journalists these days, there is a great need to be on the ground working in the spirit of a free press. The goal is to do this as safely as possible.

2. **What is the risk of NOT being on the ground covering stories? How do we determine if the dangers/threats are too great to cover a story? Discuss.**

This is an opportunity for journalists to start determining what their personal boundaries are in terms of risks. This is also where performing a thorough risk assessment can help journalists decide whether they wish to pursue certain stories.

“In Syria, freelancers like James Foley cover a dangerous war zone with no front lines” Ellen Shearer, *Washington Post* (Aug 22, 2014)

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/in-syria-freelancers-like-james-foley-cover-a-dangerous-war-zone-with-no-front-lines/2014/08/22/25e4bfda-295b-11e4-86ca-6f03cbd15c1a_story.html?utm_term=.8f213e281f45

Ellen Shearer, co-director of Medill's National Security Journalism Initiative, one of James Foley's journalism professors, and the creator of the James W. Foley Journalist Safety Guide, examines how media coverage around the world has changed and provides insight into Jim's motivations to continue covering dangerous areas of the world despite personal risk.

Discussion Questions

1. **How has access to dangerous areas changed over time? Why are more and more freelancers covering dangerous conflicts overseas?**

Frontlines are becoming more blurred to the point where it feels the frontlines are everywhere and nowhere at all. In addition, the number of foreign bureaus has diminished, there are less staffers, and news organizations are less willing to send their reporters to these dangerous areas of the world. As a result, freelance journalists are often filling this void.

2. **What were Foley's motivations to continue to report in conflict zones? Do you think these reasons indicate that this type of reporting is necessary? Discuss.**

According to Shearer, Jim “believed, rightly, that giving Americans a complete picture of the Syrian conflict means going beyond officials’ statements. Jim also knew well that the cost of getting the truth could be high. But the cost in not getting the full story is real, too — we have fewer witnesses to the historic events unfolding in Syria and elsewhere.” Do students feel the risks – which Jim recognized – are worth “getting the truth”? Why or why not?

“James Foley’s Choices” Mark Singer, *The New Yorker* (August 22, 2014)

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/james-foleys-choices>

In this article, Singer explores James Foley’s background and delves into the choices Jim made before he was captured in Libya. The article also considers Jim’s initial motivation to cover overseas conflicts. Included is a fascinating multi-part narrative that Jim wrote about his experience being detained by Gaddafi’s forces, life as a captive, his release, and ultimate return to Libya.

Discussion Question

1. **What are your motivations for becoming a journalist? Are you interested in covering conflict areas? Why? Discuss.**

Foley did not become a journalist until later in his life. He was inspired to travel the world and to learn more about all people. This is a good opportunity to discuss with students their motivation to work overseas and to connect that with the importance of completing risk assessments before venturing into conflict zones.

“Why the Best War Reporter in a Generation Had to Suddenly Stop” Mark Warren, *Esquire* (Sep 15, 2015)

<https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a37838/end-of-war-1015/>

This article profiles war journalist C.J Chivers, a former Marine and an expert in ballistics and battlefield tactics. Chivers, considered by many the best war reporter of this generation, ultimately walked away from conflict zones, in large part because of the impact on his family.

Discussion Questions

1. **How much should family considerations factor into choices made by journalists who wish to cover conflict zones?**

C.J. Chivers discusses how he could no longer put his family – particularly his son who developed hives once while Chivers was away on assignment – through the trauma of war reporting. This echoes James Foley’s concerns about the worry he caused his family while reporting in dangerous parts of the world. Students should consider the concern they may cause for those who care for them when pursuing journalism as a career.

2. **Chivers notes that he recognized he was becoming too hypervigilant about common moments in everyday life. Do you think this is connected to PTSD that many journalists experience? What are ways of dealing with this?**

PTSD is a very real concern for journalists that cover traumatic events. In other modules, the importance of self-care is discussed. Journalists (and newsroom managers) need to take necessary precautions to make sure they are taking care of themselves, physically and mentally. Journalists should make efforts to talk through their experiences and/or find other strategies so they are not bottling up everything on the inside.

“The Rules of Conflict Reporting are Changing” Janine di Giovanni, *Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)* (April 27, 2015)

<https://cpj.org/2015/04/attacks-on-the-press-the-rules-of-conflict-reporting-are-changing.php>

This article examines the death of Marie Colvin, a 58-year-old Irish American reporter, who was killed by a rocket blast in Syria. Colvin was an experienced conflict journalist and her death served as a wakeup call to many conflict journalists. According to di Giovanni, Colvin's death signified a change in how conflicts are covered. Being experienced, prepared and brave no longer was enough to protect conflict journalists.

Discussion Questions

1. According to di Giovanni, what changes have made conflict journalism increasingly more dangerous? Discuss.

While the threat of kidnapping had always been a concern, the sheer number of kidnappings increased in ways not seen before. Journalists James Foley, Steven Sotloff and others were brutally murdered and the videos used as propaganda. Another change that di Giovanni points out is that foreign journalists no longer can count on the trust of the local population.

2. Once controversial step that di Giovanni “gingerly” suggested was to have a system of journalistic accreditation. What do students think about this type of system? What, if any, steps can journalists take to stay safe in light of the increasing dangers they face?

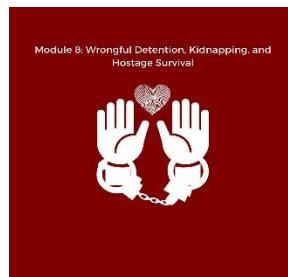
There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer. Students should be willing to have a frank and honest discussion about what steps can and should be taken when reporting overseas. These are tough questions, and there are no easy answers.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) US Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs

(Last updated Aug 8, 2018)

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/step.html>

This free service allows U.S. citizens traveling or living abroad to receive the latest security updates from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. It is strongly encouraged that journalists planning to work overseas enroll in STEP to stay informed about threats that may arise.



*** Module 8: Wrongful Detention, Kidnapping, and Hostage Survival (Added May 3, 2021)

Objective

The goal is to help students think about the risks involved when covering work at home and abroad in areas that may be unfamiliar and/or fraught with danger. Included are tips for addressing security risks as well as strategies and techniques if wrongfully detained, kidnapped, or held hostage. This may be a difficult topic to cover, but students and instructors should not shy away from thinking through these worse case scenarios. Included in this module is a five-part, firsthand scenario from Caitlan Coleman, who was abducted and held hostage for five years by the Haqqani Network in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Caitlan shares specific details about things she would have done differently, strategies that helped her and her family survive, and information about the reintegration process upon her rescue and return home.

Readings & Scenarios

“Tips for Independent Media Facing Security Risks” SembraMedia, *International Journalists’ Network (IJN)* (Sept 11, 2019)

<https://ijnet.org/en/story/tips-independent-media-facing-security-risks>

Three reporters and editors share tips for dealing with dangerous situations, including a well-planned strategy, never traveling alone, and not always trusting authorities (balance listening to authority figures with an understanding of journalists’ rights). Ernesto Aroche, *Lado B*’s editor and founder, offers a pre-reporting security strategy. First, understand the assignment’s timeline and expense plan. Next, check if security is reliable, if communication lines are open, and best (safest) hours to work. Lastly, establish a chain of response if threats arise and government contacts if needed. Other tips include scouting the location beforehand, keeping to a schedule, and maintaining regular contact with the newsroom.

Discussion Questions

1. How can journalists mitigate risks when working in new and/or dangerous locations?

Risk assessments (a pre-planned strategy) are essential. This includes these three main points:

- **Coverage period and expense plan.** For this stage, they asked themselves the following: Will the coverage last more than a day? Are there safe hotels? How much will be spent on meals? What transportation will be used? Is the area safe?
- **Interview agenda.** Are the authorities reliable or not? Do we need to introduce ourselves to them? Will the meetings with the sources be in public places or in less conspicuous locations? Are there particularly dangerous hours?
- **Security protocol.** The team defined a system for monitoring the area’s security and defined a chain of response in the event of a threat. They also identified contacts in the government, as well as protection organizations.

2. What else can journalists do to help mitigate their risk?

Journalists, when able, should work in teams and make efforts to scout the location beforehand. Schedules should be kept and those on assignment should keep in contact with the newsroom at all times. Be sure to consider the legitimacy of authority, when necessary.

“Journalists Under Attack: Lessons from the Field” Jennifer Dorroh, *International Journalists’ Network (IJN)* (June 3, 2020)

<https://ijnet.org/en/story/journalists-under-attack-lessons-field>

Threats do not just exist abroad. Journalists, especially during the protests taking place in 2020 and 2021, are seeing similar dangers in the US. Freelancer Linda Tirado lost sight in her left eye when shot with a foam bullet fired by Minnesota State Police. Branden Hunter had tear gas in his eyes when Detroit Police confronted him with a shotgun. Despite identifying themselves as press, police threw a tear gas canister at Hunter and colleagues. Ahmer Khan, 2020 Human Rights Press Award Winner, and Maria Salazar-Ferro, CPJ Emergencies Director, are also part of the conversation. Tips in this article include assessing risks in advance, emotional self-care, digital security, and how to cover a protest.

Discussion Questions

1. What precautions can journalists think about before covering protests or other events that have the potential to turn violent?

There are a number of steps recommended when preparing to cover potentially dangerous events. First, complete a risk assessment. Next, think about self-care and the threshold for covering events that involve trauma. Finally, have a plan for digital security.

2. How can journalists mitigate risk while on the scene?

Tirado emphasizes the importance of building a network with journalists on the ground. This can be important over time and serve as a way to keep each other safe. Carry extra memory cards (dummy cards) that can be swapped out if equipment and data are confiscated.

“Journalist Held Captive by Pirates says Focus and Forgiveness were Crucial” Interview with Michael Scott Moore by Dave Davies, *National Public Radio (NPR)* (July 30, 2018)

<https://www.npr.org/2018/07/30/633965533/journalist-held-captive-by-pirates-says-focus-and-forgiveness-were-crucial>

Michael Scott Moore, who spent over two years as a hostage, discusses his thought process and tactics while being held hostage. Moore did try to escape while at sea, but once recaptured and brought to a prison on land, Moore realized his captivity would last for a while. To deal with the stress and uncertainty, Moore requested a mat to start doing yoga. While the guards laughed at first, they were not getting much exercise themselves so eventually joined in. Moore identifies the main things that allowed him to survive his captivity, both physically and mentally.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about Moore’s attempt to escape? Discuss.

Moore assessed the situation and tried to escape by jumping overboard. However, when the captain was able to maneuver the boat, Moore threw up his hands and surrendered. This is an opportunity to think through the pros and cons of trying to escape from captivity.

2. What strategies did Moore use to help him survive mentally while in captivity? Why was it important for Moore to forgive his captors?

Moore requested a yoga mat and decided to start doing yoga as a means of coping. What other activities could be useful in this type of stressful environment? Students can consider what they would do if they were in a situation similar to Moore’s. This is also an opportunity to discuss why the act of forgiveness proved beneficial for Moore. Is this something that students could see themselves doing? Why or why not?

“German journalist who gave birth as hostage in Syria speaks of ordeal” Philip Oltermann, *The Guardian* (March 21, 2019)

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/21/german-journalist-who-was-held-captive-and-gave-birth-in-syria-speaks-of-her-ordeal>

In this interview, Janina Findeisen discusses her survival after being abducted when traveling alone to Syria in 2015 to film a documentary. Findeisen, who was seven months pregnant at the time, said the risks did not concern her, and she wanted to film the documentary because it would be her last project for a while once the baby came. Findeisen recounts how she and her driver were ambushed and kidnapped when crossing the border back into Turkey. As time passed, Findeisen maintained hope she would be home in Germany to deliver her baby. Eventually, her kidnappers blackmailed a doctor to deliver her child. After giving birth, she received better treatment, including receiving chocolates, juice, a teddy bear, and the best diapers in Syria. Findeisen was freed by another group of Islamists in September of 2016.

Discussion Questions

1. What strategies for survival did Findeisen employ in captivity? Do you think escaping with scavenged tools was a possibility or was this to feel a sense of control?

Findeisen kept a journal by writing on tiny bits of scrap that she collected. She also tried to discretely contact people nearby and collected tools that she could use if she felt the need to attempt an escape. Students may also consider if collecting tools was a legitimate attempt to potentially escape or provided Findeisen with a feeling of control while in captivity.

2. What type of impact would the captors' early threat of beheading followed by the showering of gifts after Findeisen gave birth have?

Discuss the psychological trauma of being a hostage. The intentional manipulation of emotions can have a profound impact. This is an important time for students to consider the strategies and techniques they can employ to try and protect their emotional well-being.

“After escaping captivity, American detainees come home to credit penalties” Ali Rogin, *PBS* (July 3, 2019)

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/after-escaping-captivity-american-detainees-come-home-to-credit-penalties>

Among other things, *Washington Post* reporter Jason Rezaian dealt with credit penalties since returning from captivity. It took over two years for Rezaian to fix his downgraded credit report and for the IRS to help him expunge his records from when he was held hostage. This is not uncommon when people return home after being detained or held hostage. Although the IRS tries to keep track of those being held overseas, the U.S. government still classifies hostages and wrongful detainees separately. Rachel Briggs, executive director of Hostage US, says, “Whether it’s Evin Prison in Tehran or a boat off the coast of Somalia, the experiences of recovery are pretty much identical.” Rezaian notes survivors need to be looked at holistically and given the best chance at surviving when they return home.

Discussion Question

1. What are some obstacles former hostages face when they return home? Discuss.

Often, former hostages are confronted with an array of obstacles, including financial, upon their release from captivity. This can be tied to unpaid taxes, missed credit card or student loan payments, a lapsed mortgage, etc. These issues can complicate the adjustment when returning home. According to the article, “Part of the problem stems from the legal distinction between hostages of non-state actors and people illegally detained by foreign governments.” Both the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation and Hostage US are working with the US government to help improve the reintegration process for former hostages.

The Experience of Caitlan Coleman

Caitlan Coleman and her former husband were abducted while backpacking in Afghanistan in 2012. At the time of her abduction, Caitlan was pregnant. During the next five years while being held by the Haqqani network, the Colemans had three children. The family was routinely moved to various locations in Afghanistan and Pakistan until October 2017 when they were rescued by Pakistani forces in Kurram Agency, Pakistan. In the five-part scenario below, Caitlan reflects on her experience.

Scenario, Five Parts: Caitlan Coleman, Afghanistan

Part 1: How to Avoid being Taken Hostage (A Reflection)

When my former spouse and I crossed into Afghanistan, we found ourselves, admittedly, in way over our heads. Though we had done a fair amount of backpacking, including in other Central Asian countries for the previous few months, this was an entirely different world. I didn't speak any local languages, was unfamiliar with local customs, and to make things worse, I stuck out, even more so than the backpacker or NGO worker I occasionally passed on the streets. This was because I was wearing traditional Muslim clothing, but from the wrong Muslim culture. In Afghanistan, women wear either a hijab (hair covering) or a full body covering called a burqa. What I had was something called a jilbab, popular in the Gulf states, also a full body covering, but largely unknown amongst the women of Afghanistan. I was warned about this by a couple of the locals who offered us shelter, but we didn't listen.

The day of my hostage taking, my former spouse negotiated a cab taking us out of the US controlled North Afghanistan, into Ghazni province, of Taliban controlled South Afghanistan. We were the only occupants of the cab, which was odd as anyone offering cab rides wants to stuff their car or van with as many paying passengers as possible. The cab ride was entirely uneventful through Kabul province, and even the US troops that manned the checkpoint between Kabul and Ghazni didn't question us or warn of any potential hazards.

How I was captured is a testament of what not to do more than anything else. Here are some things I should have done (or considered) that could have made a significant difference:

Preparation and Prior Research *Becoming familiar with the geopolitical and local situation in Afghanistan, as well as the culture. I could have avoided wearing the wrong style of clothing, and kept a lower profile. Have a plan for what types of situations are safe.*

Situational Awareness *At times, we did feel uncomfortable about situations. There's no guidebook that covers all the warning signs; however, some questions you can mentally ask yourself can help, such as:*

- *Is this situation the norm for the culture, environment and location?*
- *Is there something about the situation that doesn't seem rational or make sense?*
- *Is somebody offering me something that seems too good to be true? If so, what is their motive?*
- *What is the demeanor of those around me? Are people taking a lot of interest in me, or going about their business? Do the people I am interacting with seem nervous? Or overly generous?*

Be Flexible Enough to Quickly Change Plans *Practice being able to walk away and adjust your plans when alarm bells go off. If there is an intent to abduct you, the abductors also have a plan, and if you go off script, they must as well. Many will walk away instead.*

Don't Assume You'll Be Warned of Dangerous Situations *Take into account warnings that an area is dangerous, but don't assume everything is fine if you aren't warned. US soldiers at a checkpoint between*

Kabul and Ghazni province never questioned our trip into Taliban territory, or warned us to not proceed. Within an hour of leaving the US checkpoint, we were abducted at gunpoint.

Have a Contingency Plan *Have a safety plan and exit strategy. Tailor the plan to the current situation.*

Discussion Questions for Part 1

1. Caitlan Coleman identifies a number of things that she could have done differently? What are some things that stand out?

Students should generate a list based on Caitlan’s reflection and then discuss. While Caitlan reflects on her particular experience, students can and should think about how these things can relate to other situations.

2. Caitlan identifies five things she felt could have helped. What are they? List and discuss.

(1) Preparation and Prior Research; (2) Situational Awareness; (3) Be Flexible Enough to Quickly Change Plans; (4) Don’t Assume You’ll Be Warned of Dangerous Situations; and (5) Have a Contingency Plan

Part 2: Initial captivity (The First Days)

A lone figure appeared on the side of the road, holding an assault rifle, surrounded by vast, open landscape punctuated with rock formations. When I spotted him, I filed him away as part of the landscape. Seconds later, I heard the resounding crash of his AK-47 on the hood of the taxicab we were riding in.

I started to go into shock, unwilling to grapple with this reality. The taxicab driver pulled off the road and into a gulch where another man was waiting there for us. The two men made the taxi driver climb into the trunk, and they climbed into the front, driving the taxi at breakneck speed. The next few hours felt like days and months and years of life going by. I barely moved, frozen to my seat. Mentally, I remained calm. I didn’t feel the panic and fear that I would have expected (that came later, and many times). I instinctively knew that to survive, I could not panic, or give way to my emotions.

What I could not grapple with in those first hours was the enormity of what was happening. This wasn’t a little mishap, an adventure gone awry that we could laugh about the next morning. Narrowing my mind was a coping skill to manage the panic, but it would have benefited me to have more presence of mind.

Things to remember if captured:

- **Hostage takers are often nervous, suspicious, and possibly having second thoughts.** Don’t make them more nervous or inclined to second thoughts. This is not a moment for heroics.
- **Observe what you can and file it away in your mind.** If they blindfold you, don’t try to fight it. If they restrain you, don’t try to break free. If spoken to, cooperate without saying too much.
- **Use coping strategies.** Pray, use grounding techniques, and/or breathing exercises. Have a mentally rehearsed reaction strategy for a crisis situation.
- **Keep hydrated and eat when food or drink is available.** There’s no guarantee there will be a regular schedule. During captivity, there was an ever-shifting dynamic of feast or famine.
- **You are stronger than you know.** Hold on to this.

Discussion Question(s) for Part 2

1. Caitlan describes her initial reaction when first abducted. What stood out? She also provides strategies to start employing right from the beginning of captivity. What are they, and why are they important? Would can be added, if anything, to this list?

Caitlan talks about how time seemed to slow down. Students will have different responses to this and should think about how they might respond.

From the beginning of captivity, Caitlan emphasizes situational awareness regarding these four things:

- Hostage takers are often nervous, suspicious, and possibly having second thoughts.
- Observe what you can and file it away in your mind.
- Use coping strategies.
- Keep hydrated and eat when food or drink is available.

Students should consider this list and discuss the importance based on Coleman's reflection. This is also a time for students to consider what they would add to this list.

Part 3: Managing for the Long Haul

The first four to five days after being taken hostage, we were transported across Afghanistan, crossing the border into a region of Pakistan known as Wakiristan. This journey was difficult, frightening, and full of uncertainty. Then, I was deposited without ceremony in a locked room inside what appeared to be a repurposed abandonment. There was no answer about 'what comes next.'

Over the days, months, and years to come, I learned to combat the deprivation of stimulation by finding ways to keep busy and stimulated, and to modify my perspective to make the intolerable became tolerable. Boredom became a surprisingly frequent challenge.

There was no "normal" the next five years. At times, our captors were kind, and quick to ensure I had everything I needed. Sometimes it was overwhelming just how much of their supplies were shared with us. Once I was even gifted costume jewelry, and a couple of times a bottle of perfume. To counter that, sometimes we went months where the most basic necessities – medicine, toilet paper, food – were hard or impossible to get. We would receive a pen and a notebook, or a flashlight, then someone would decide that was a bad idea and confiscate them. Stockpiling became essential to survival.

As the months turned to years, thinking about freedom became an impediment. Too often, we were told we were weeks, or in one case, just one or two days away from going home. At first, I believed the captors and when the crushing disappointment and letdown came, it was overwhelming. To overcome the boredom and lack of stimulation, I developed mind games and fantasies, developed and stuck to a routine, kept up with physical exercise, and mentally strategized requests for materials to entertain or stimulate (I call this "captor politics").

Equally important, I resolved to never let a "no" or a bad turn of events cause discouragement, and I continually planned and worked to improve my situation. This required that I avoid dwelling on the past or the future. This allowed me to prepare for anything and maintain hope, even if the scale of that hope was constantly changing. I accepted that this was not just captivity, this was my life.

Discussion Questions for Part 3

1. Caitlan addresses the boredom that comes with captivity. What did Caitlan do to help pass the time and deal with this boredom?

Caitlan discusses the importance of mind games, routines, physical exercise and constantly using her mind. Why would these things be important while stuck in captivity? This is also another opportunity for students to consider what they would do in this situation.

2. Caitlan concludes Part 3 by writing, “I accepted that this was not just captivity, *this was my life.*” What was the importance of looking at her captivity from this perspective? Answers will vary.

Part 4: Release/Rescue

Two days before our release, the guards told us we were going to be transferred. This was so common that I had developed a routine for “transfer days.” We were taken to a location about an hour away, and I waited patiently for some hint of whether this was a short- or long-term location. The second night, they brought us cooking supplies, which suggested it was long-term.

The following morning, a frantic young guard barged in shouting, “Transfer! Transfer!” I rolled my eyes and began preparing for another transfer. Shortly after, two strangers arrived and we were drugged with ketamine, which had happened only once before. Despite the ketamine, I was aware of the sleek, shiny new black SUV we were in the trunk of. Before long, I was fully awake. Previously, the captors drove us in old Toyota Corollas and pickup trucks. In this new SUV, everything seemed a little bit off.

On the drive, I spotted a Shell gas station. Since leaving Kabul five years ago, I had seen no modern shops or amenities. Now we were on a highway, passing Shell stations. But driving towards what?

We were heading to Kohat, a small Pakistani city. Our SUV was stopped at a checkpoint and when the driver stepped out, I heard an argument. Another captor jumped into the driver’s seat and we sped off at top speed. We were now in the middle of a high-speed car chase, and I could hear gunfire around us. After our captor tried escaping with several sharp turns, the tires were shot out and we came to a halt. We remained in the trunk as the captors argued. Ultimately, the captors fled.

Several minutes of uncertainty followed, as hazy figures circled our vehicle. Who were they? After seeing a police cap, we decided our best course of action was to start shouting. Fortunately, the men identified themselves in broken English as Pakistani ISI officers, and told us they were there to help us. We were loaded into their SUVs and brought to a police station. We were finally free.

Discussion Question for Part 4

1. **At this point, Caitlan’s reflection suggests that captivity had become a series of routines, even when it came to being moved from one location to another. What does this suggest about the things that can be controlled when being held hostage?**

Even here, Caitlan had no idea that a rescue attempt was in process. This can lead to a conversation about what can and cannot be controlled by a hostage. Students and instructors might consider the balance between mental and physical self-care while being held in captivity.

Part 5: Returning Home

The part of being held hostage that is not often discussed is the challenge of returning and reintegrating into your former life, after captivity. I was a hostage for five years, and the experience altered the course of my life. It also altered my connection to the world I left behind irreversibly.

Early on, government officials explained reintegration would not be simple. For five years, I waited and prayed to be reunited with family and friends, and they had waited just as long to be reunited with me. But our expectations for that moment existed in a vacuum, isolated from each other. I felt like a time traveler, walking into my world five years in the future. Over those five years, I experienced things unimaginable to those back home, who still held an image of me from five years before.

Another challenge involved navigating the world of responsibilities that being free entails. Regaining control of my life has been wonderful, but there are details that are less wonderful. Problems can arise with the IRS, banks, and credit card companies. Medical and mental health issues must be addressed. Employment can be hard to find and there may be a dependence on family. These new demands can prove overwhelming and social interactions can lead to a feeling of overstimulation. Simple things, can no longer be taken for granted.

Some things to keep in mind about the return and reintegration process:

- **Avoid holding on to expectations about what reconnecting with family will look like.** Keep an open mind, and remember you may not understand them, and they may not understand you, but they love you very much.
- **Ask for help to figure out the logistics of your needs upon returning home.** Instead of trying to figure out medical, financial, and living arrangements on your own, seek out a professional or a trusted family member to help. In Canada, there was an agency to handle the complexity of our situation, and when I returned to Pennsylvania nine months later, there was a social work agency able to assist. The US government has federal programs designed to help former hostages reintegrate, but they are still in their infancy and need time to grow into helpful resources in time.
- **Expect to take things slowly when you return.** Many hostages report feeling euphoria and adrenaline in the first days of freedom. Some, like me, don't sleep for days. Depending on the individual, being around others may prove difficult. Feeling agoraphobic, with the whole world suddenly opening again, is not unusual. Time is needed to process this (re)adjustment.
- **Make your needs known.** Hostages rarely have control over needs being met, and there is little concern about their feelings. This can result in extreme passivity when thrust back into the world. But there are people who want to help. Communication is key to taking back control of one's life.
- **Don't ignore the need to process your trauma.** A former hostage told me any one who lives through captivity will suffer from PTSD. No one is immune to trauma. Processing and dealing with trauma can happen on one's own terms and time, but finding a professional to guide the process is essential.

Discussion Questions for Part 5

1. **Caitlin discusses some of the difficulties involved with reintegrating into society, including things that might not initially be considered. What are some of the difficulties that she addresses?**

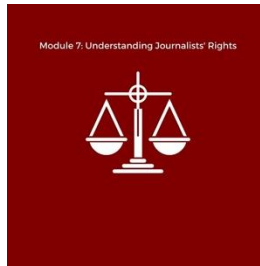
Caitlan brings up how difficult it can be reconnecting with loved ones, and how time in captivity can lead to agoraphobia. In addition, there are medical, mental health, financial, and other issues that must be addressed.

2. **What are some important things to consider when reintegrating into society after being held in captivity? List and discuss. What other things might be added?**

Here is a list of things to keep in mind:

- Avoid holding on to expectations about what reconnecting with family will look like.
- Ask for help to figure out the logistics of your needs upon returning home.
- Expect to take things slowly when you return.
- Make your needs known; Don't ignore the need to process your trauma.

Students should also consider other things that may make the process of reentering society more difficult and generate a list of resources that might be available to help those struggling with the process.



Module 9: Understanding Journalists' Rights

Objective

This module was inspired by a conversation with Thorne Anderson, associate professor of journalism at the University of North Texas, who has filed stories as an international freelance photojournalist with several outlets, including *The New York Times*, *LA Times*, *Boston Globe*, and *Chicago Tribune*. According to the [US Press Freedom Tracker](#), as of July 5, 2020 there have been over 470 reports of aggression against journalists covering Black Lives Matter protests across the United States. This includes the arrest of nearly 50 journalists and the seizure of equipment from other journalists. The purpose of this module is to ensure that instructors and students understand the basic rights of journalists. This will help journalists make informed choices when choosing how to cover protests, including what they do and do not have access to as a member of the press as well as what to do in the event they are detained by law enforcement officers. Knowing their legal rights will allow journalists to perform their important work more safely and can help in de-escalating potential confrontations.

Readings/Resources

“What some reporters get wrong about the First Amendment” Jonathan Peters, *Columbia Journalism Review (CJR)* (February 5, 2018)

https://www.cjr.org/united_states_project/what-some-reporters-get-wrong-about-the-first-amendment.php#:~:text=The%20constitutional%20rights%20journalists%20have,as%20the%20public%20in%20general.&text=An%20example%3A%20Photographing%20a%20newsworthy,because%20it%20is%20the%20press.

In this article, Peters shares responses from eleven media law professors and attorneys regarding common misconceptions about what is and is not protected under the First Amendment and other laws related to the media. Several topics are covered in this article that, depending on the content of the course, can be incorporated quite effectively, including news gathering protections, social media content, access to news-gathering on private property, etc.

Discussion Questions

1. Do members of the press have the same or different rights than the general public?

This is an important question. Mickey Osterreicher, general counsel of the *National Press Photographers Association*, notes, “While photographing or recording in public, the press has no greater right of access than the public, but the press has no less right either. An example: Photographing a newsworthy event, the press may not be kept farther away than the public, but the press is not entitled to be closer just because it is the press. Some places, such as California, have codified a greater access right for the press, but that is a statutory right, not a constitutional one.”

2. Do journalists have the right to republish something that was posted on Facebook, Instagram or some other social media website?

The simple answer is no. Just because something is found on a social media website does not mean that it is fair game for others to share. Permission must still be sought and, according to

Chip Stewart, media law professor at Texas Christian University, simply “publishing a photo with ‘photo from Facebook’ or ‘Instagram’” is not proper attribution.

“Journalists, attacked by police and rioters alike, must build local bridges” Joel Simon, *CPJ*, from *Columbia Journalism Review*. (June 2, 2020)

<https://www.cjr.org/opinion/reporters-press-freedom-police-protests.php>

In this op-ed, Joel Simon examines how frayed relationships between journalists and law enforcement over the past decade have contributed to aggression towards members of the press.

Discussion Questions

1. What is “kettling” and why should journalists be aware of this law enforcement tactic?

Kettling is a technique employed by law enforcement officers to force protesters into a contained area to detain groups, which is often followed by arrests. Journalists are not immune to this technique. According to Simon, “Compounding the risk to reporters is the breakdown in their relationship with local law enforcement...[T]he decline in local media...has made it more difficult for the police to identify who is a journalist and who is not. The response by the police is too often to arrest those who say they are journalists.” Journalists must also be aware of the threat posed by extremists who attend protests.

2. What can journalists and media organizations do to stem this rise in violence towards the media?

According to Simon, journalists and media organizations must make efforts to engage with police departments across the country. In addition, media organizations must encourage government officials to support a free press and speak out against police abuses. Journalists must have awareness about their rights *and* the resources available to them (see [CPJ Safety Advisory: Covering U.S. protests over police violence](#)).

“Police, Protesters and the Press” *Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press (RCFP)*

Updated June 2020

<https://www.rcfp.org/resources/police-protesters-and-the-press/>

Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press (RCFP) provides a 13-page PDF (link on the bottom right) that “aims to help journalists understand their rights at protests and avoid arrest when reporting on these events. It summarizes the legal landscape and provides strategies and tools to help journalists avoid incidents with police and navigate them successfully should they arise.” All journalists, especially student journalists, should familiarize themselves with their rights. This invaluable resource answers questions about rights, and what to do if detained and/or arrested.

Discussion questions

1. Simply put, what rights do journalists have under the First Amendment?

Journalists have the same rights as the general public. Journalists are allowed in any area that the public is allowed, journalists cannot be arrested because they have published negative stories, and police may not arrest journalists if they are not interfering or disrupting the activities of law enforcement. Journalists may be arrested for trespassing or for failure to follow a police order to disperse.

2. What is a “Terry stop”? Why is it essential that journalists know this information?

Named after the *Terry vs. Ohio* Supreme Court ruling, “law enforcement could briefly detain and ‘frisk’ an individual for weapons, consistent with the Fourth Amendment, so long as the officer has a ‘reasonable suspicion’ that the individual is armed and dangerous.” It is important to note that this activity must be justified at the time it occurs. When asked to

identify themselves, journalists must be aware of the laws of the state in which they are working as the laws vary.

3. What is the Privacy Protection Act of 1980 and how does this relate to journalism?

If law enforcement officers attempt to seize equipment and/or materials, journalists should make clear that they are members of the press and that they intend to disseminate their work to the public. If law enforcement does seize equipment and/or materials, journalists have the right and expectation to receive their equipment back in a reasonable amount of time, subject to jurisdiction.

“Student journalists covering protests face unprecedented violence from police” Joe Severino, *Student Press Law Center (SPLC)* (June 30, 2020)

<https://splc.org/2020/06/student-journalists-covering-protests-face-unprecedented-violence-from-police/>

In this article, Severino lists several examples of student journalists being targeted and/or assaulted by law enforcement officers. Student journalists must always remember that they face the same risks as their professional counterparts. This article examines the importance of journalists knowing their rights and provides concrete steps that can be taken to help ensure safety.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some threats and dangers student journalists have encountered while covering Black Lives Matter protests?

Even when identifying themselves as members of the press, several examples of student journalists being assaulted occurred. Severino recounts instances of student journalists being pepper sprayed, shot at with foam-tipped bullets, and being shoved to the ground.

2. In addition to knowing their rights, what other steps can journalists take in emergency situations?

SPLC’s [tip sheet guide](#) provides several tips, including the following:

- Make an emergency plan before you go into the field including which hospital is closest, who you’d call if arrested and who they can call for legal or other help.
- Turn off your phone’s fingerprint scanner and facial recognition
- Always work with a “buddy”
- Wear conspicuous press credentials
- If you are stopped by law enforcement, ask immediately if you are under arrest
- Immediately ask for legal representation if you are arrested
- If you are detained and released, immediately contact the SPLC

3. What can journalists do if denied access or if asked to disperse with the general public?

According to SPLC, “Journalists should comply with requests from law enforcement but can calmly discuss their rights if they feel a request violates those rights. Journalists should remain respectful when interacting with police and avoid acting in a manner that incites violence, creates danger, or interferes with law enforcement.” Journalists should always be prepared to display their press credentials.

4. What are some things journalists can do when covering law enforcement abuses?

Journalists should document interactions with law enforcement and call out inaccuracies. When possible, journalists should use their camera to record evidence of any encounters. Journalists should also always present themselves as a member of the press while dressing and acting accordingly. Journalists should also know if the press is exempted from any curfew orders.

“RTDNA Guidelines: Journalist Arrests” *Radio Television Digital News Association* (2020)

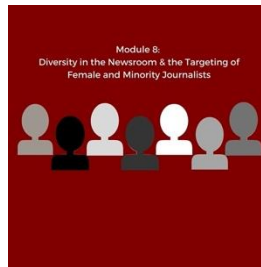
https://www.rtdna.org/content/guidelines_for_journalist_arrests

Recognizing that journalists are increasingly at risk of being assaulted and/or arrested, RTDNA developed guidelines that news organizations can employ to make sure that protocols are in place. The best defense for all journalists is to know the law and to understand journalists’ rights. RTDNA points out that “everyone has the right to record the actions of police officers or interview someone in a public place. But sometimes a sidewalk in front of a building is not public property, and public locations may not be public after an order to disperse has been issued by authorities.”

Discussion Question

1. What are some steps that journalists can take to avoid negative interactions with law enforcement officers while covering protests?

- Prominently display press credentials including photo and any organizational affiliations.
- Remain calm and professional.
- Once detained, no longer argue your position; however, until arrested, law enforcement cannot seize your equipment. Remove smart cards, if able.
- Best practice is to provide identification information, but no more without legal representation present.
- Unless they are Border Patrol Agents, do not provide your cellphone password.
- If given one phone call, contact your news director. That person can then reach other contacts – personal, work, legal, etc. – for you.



Module 10: Diversity in the Newsroom & the Targeting of Female and Minority Journalists

Objective

Currently, diversity in the newsroom lags behind overall diversity in the workplace. There have been some encouraging trends as younger newsroom employees “show greater racial, ethnic and gender diversity,” according to the Pew Research Center. However, the Pew Research Center notes nearly 77% of newsroom employees are non-Hispanic whites and nearly 48% are non-Hispanic white males. This lack of diversity impacts how different stories and beats are covered. Another pressing issue involves specific safety risks that female and minority journalists face. Evidence indicates female and minority journalists are targeted more than their non-Hispanic white male colleagues.

Readings

“Diversity and Inclusivity in Journalism” *American Press Institute (API)* (2020)

<https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/diversity-programs/>

According to *API*, their “primary goal...is a public information ecosystem (consisting of journalism products and the public’s own conversations) that fairly represents, includes and aids varied groups and viewpoints in a community.” This involves not only the hiring of diverse employees, but a commitment to the empowerment and retention of diverse employees. This resource can lead to a discussion about what organizations – including university newsrooms – are doing to promote diversity in the newsroom in terms of hiring and retaining and encouraging diverse viewpoints.

Discussion Questions

1. **Why is it important that newsrooms make concerted efforts to hire and retain diverse employees? How does this connect to sustainability?**

A diverse newsroom has the power to serve whole communities in a more effective, positive way. *API* specifically emphasizes that diversity is (1) a business imperative and (2) a journalism imperative. From a business perspective, diversity will help reach new audiences, especially the younger generation. From a journalism perspective, journalism should serve all members of a community in order to benefit all. Diverse voices are required to do that.

“Five decades after Kerner Report, representation remains an issue in media” Darren Walker, *Columbia Journalism Review* (March 5, 2018)

<https://www.cjr.org/analysis/race-media.php>

This explores the racial and gender dynamics that exist, on average, in most newsrooms. The 1968 Kerner Report suggested that there was a “lack of adequate representation among the people assigning, reporting, and editing media coverage.” Women and people of color comprise a smaller percentage of employees in the newsroom than in the overall workplace and are more frequently threatened and harassed.

Discussion Question

1. **Why is it important that newsrooms more accurately reflect the diversity of our country?**

According to this article from *Columbia Journalism Review*, “We [as a nation] must push media companies to be more transparent about the makeup of their staffs, and work to hold them accountable on issues of diversity, inclusion, and harassment. And we must also recognize the ways in which a healthy, thriving, independent media is necessary for the survival of our democracy, and do our best to preserve both.” A more diverse newsroom can have the added benefit of providing support to journalists who face harassment.

“Journalism for Black Lives: A Reporting Guide” *The Movement for Black Lives and Free Press* (2020)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PCBA7WIZlef6iNpQyXEWox6RNLb3TIG/view>

This four-page reporting guide considers the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics in examining how journalists can provide “ethical journalism by bringing truth to light and shifting power away from the anti-Black status quo, and into the hands of communities fighting to build a shared future.” The focus is on journalists’ willingness and ability to do the following: (1) Seek Truth & Report It, (2) Minimize Harm, (3) Act Independently, and (4) Be Accountable.

Discussion Questions

- 1. In the reporting guide, the following argument is made: Ethical reporting on Black uprising, oppression and despair means going beyond capturing powerful images and stories. What does this mean and what tactics are offered to achieve this?**

Context is critical to what is taking place. According to the guide journalists must do the following: (A) *Disrupt*: the same First Amendment rights that protect journalist also protect protesters; (B) *Dig Deep*: deeply investigate the neighborhoods being covered, including police training, staging areas, etc.; and (C) *Deprioritize*: invest in listening to community members and not just those who hold power. This includes listening to those who are disproportionately impacted (Black people, women and non-binary people, LGBTQ+, etc.)

- 2. What does it mean to “parachute” into a community? Why is this problematic?**

“Parachuting” is a form of extraction, where journalists descend upon a community for quotes, images, etc. without fully embracing the community members that live there. This type of journalism can be viewed as a form of collusion and can be just as damaging as the issues causing the crisis. Journalists should act independently and get to know their sources and make clear their intent. Good journalism is often rooted in relationships and parachuting in often limits the relationship-building that is so important. When there is not time to build these relationships, journalists should rely on people on the ground and organizations rooted in the community.

- 3. Why is “framing” important when journalists file their stories?**

The way things are framed can contribute to continued Black oppression and can dehumanize people. The reporting guide provides several examples – good protests vs. bad protests, “killed” vs. “murdered” vs. “died in police custody”, centering the loss of capital in the midst of protesting the loss of life – that students and instructors can discuss in thinking about how to cover stories.

“Journalists of color facing racism head-on: ‘It kind of rips you apart’” April Simpson, *Current: News for People in Public Media* (Nov 10, 2017)

<https://current.org/2017/11/journalists-of-color-facing-racism-head-on-it-kind-of-rips-you-apart/>

This article includes several firsthand accounts from male and female journalists of color. These experiences range from feeling uncomfortable to feeling physically and emotionally threatened. There is also a discussion about whether journalists of color should cover certain types of stories.

Discussion Questions

1. Should journalists of color avoid covering situations where they may be singled out for their race or ethnicity?

This article examines different points of view about covering certain events where journalists of color may be targeted. Quincy Walters, a reporter and host for *WGCU* in Fort Myers, FL, believes that these situations are too “tiresome and traumatic” and journalists of color should avoid them unless no other journalist is able to cover the story. In contrast, Gus Contreras, a digital producer and reporter, sees this as a double-edged sword. While these stories may involve risk, it is important for journalists of color to show they belong and make sure their voice and perspective are heard. This would be a good opportunity to discuss the role race and gender play when covering different stories.

2. Do journalists of color need any “special training” when it comes to cover these stories/events?

Different viewpoints are offered about the need for “special training” for journalists of color. One perspective is that journalists of color should receive “special” or extra training to prepare for certain situations where race may be a factor. On the other hand, another argument is that journalists of color have been navigating the issue of race their entire life and that no special training is required. Along these lines, David Sweeney, an NPR managing editor says, “[T]he guidance and training is the same for everyone: Be aware. Be careful. Don’t take unnecessary risks.” Similar to Question #1, this would be a good time for students to discuss their views on this topic.

3. What is the benefit of having journalists of color covering events, even if it may be more dangerous for them? What is the drawback if journalists of color do not cover these events? Discuss.

This could lead to an important discussion about the importance of having multiple voices and multiple perspectives in the media. Just as diversity is important in any newsroom, diversity is also important in terms of who is covering the stories we read.

“Journalists of Color Face Harassment by Sources” Jane C. Hu, *The Open Notebook* (April 9, 2019) – this article appears in Modules 3, 7, and 11

<https://www.theopennotebook.com/2019/04/09/journalists-of-color-face-harassment-by-sources/>

This resource examines the toll that harassment can take on journalists of color by explaining how seemingly small “microaggressions” of racism can build up and ultimately wear down those on the receiving end. The resource also delves into the role that editors (and newsroom managers) can play in supporting journalists of color.

Discussion Questions

1. How are “microaggressions” defined in this resource? Is there a clear line between these pinpricks of racism and a source being friendly or cordial?

Microaggressions are defined as “subtle prejudiced comments or actions directed at a member of a marginalized group.” These comments or actions often seem innocuous and, taken individually, may not have an impact; however, these microaggressions can build up over time even if the source does not intend to offend. Unfortunately, that does not lessen the impact journalists may feel.

2. What should journalists of color consider when deciding how to respond to harassment and threats?

There is not a “one-size-fits-all” response to this question, especially if the comments or actions encountered are not overtly racist. Some journalists feel it’s better to ignore the harassment and threats because responding may risk access to the source; on the other hand, many journalists feel they must challenge the harassment and threats because choosing *not* to respond proves too difficult to stomach.

“IWMF Emergency Fund” *International Women’s Media Foundation* (2019)

<https://www.iwmf.org/programs/emergency-fund/>

The *IWMF* Emergency Fund was established in 2013 to provide women journalists direct lines of support. *IWMF* has also teamed up with *The Black Journalists Relief Fund* to create the *IWMF* U.S. Journalism Emergency Fund and Black Journalists Therapy Relief Fund. The joint application form can be found here: <https://iwmf.submittable.com/submit/25d0d67f-9c98-4813-9259-7d80bca55195/joint-application-form-for-iwmf-u-s-journalism-emergency-fund-and-black-journalists-therapy-relief-fund>

Discussion Questions

1. What resources for female journalists are provided by the IWMF Emergency Fund?

- Small grants for psychological and medical care for incidents directly related to threats and crises caused by one’s work as a journalist
- Three months of temporary relocation assistance in the event of crisis or threat
- Legal aid to counter threats of imprisonment or censorship
- Non-financial assistance in the form of information about additional access to resources

2. What criteria must be met for women journalists to qualify for assistance from IWMF?

- Be a staff or freelance woman reporter, working in any medium, whose primary profession is journalism.
- Have worked full-time as a journalist within six months of applying for assistance.
- Apply for assistance with a crisis situation directly connected to work as a journalist.

“Why going solo is a risk for female reporters in the US and Canada” Lucy Westcott, James W.

Foley Fellow, *Committee to Protect Journalists* (Sep 4, 2019)

<https://cpj.org/blog/2019/09/female-journalist-broadcast-safety-solo-risks.php>

Lucy Westcott, James W. Foley Fellow for the Committee to Protect Journalists, describes the experience of an anonymous female journalist who was sent out on a solo assignment by her editor. The story involved reporting on a man who was known to be targeting and attacking young women. The young journalist felt like she had no choice but to take the assignment. According to Westcott, many female and gender non-conforming journalists feel “they lacked support or empathy from editors, who appeared to have an attitude of do the job or move aside, no matter the risk.”

This article also delves into the safety training gaps that exist domestically. For many editors, the risks are not recognized. For instance, Jason Reich, vice president of corporate security at *The New York Times* and the former director of global security at *BuzzFeed*, argues, “It’s a problem that we’ve created what I consider a false dichotomy between a conflict zone, and everything else, which is [considered] safe. It’s an outdated model.” The article points out that many female journalists believe that the risks they confront need to be taken more seriously by newsroom editors.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the risks that female journalists face?

There are many risks that female journalists face, including physical, emotional, and digital threats. Instructors should cover the risks that female journalists face while also addressing the detrimental effect this has on diversity in the media. For instance, a CPJ safety survey of

115 female and gender non-conforming journalists showed that “[t]he majority (85 percent) said they believed journalism was becoming a less safe job. When it came to safety, respondents cited working alone and crude comments as concerns.” These concerns, according to other studies, may provide the impetus for female journalists to leave the field.

2. What are some of the safety training gaps that are identified in this article?

According to Jason Reich, the false dichotomy between conflict reporting and everything else often leaves editors believing that reporting is safe and, as a result, safety risks are easily overlooked. This is especially true when it comes to solo work. Reich champions training that focuses more on “training [that] focuses on harassment, security issues— including those women face—civil unrest, and natural disasters.”

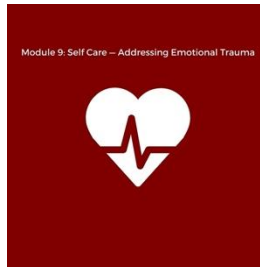
“The cost of reporting while female” Anne Helen Petersen, *Columbia Journalism Review* (Winter 2018)

https://www.cjr.org/special_report/reporting-female-harassment-journalism.php

Discussion Question

1. What are the three themes that Nadra Nittle touches upon when discussing reporting as a woman? Discuss.

- First, you teach yourself to downplay whatever threat there might be. (“I didn’t feel like my life was in danger, necessarily.”)
- Second, you tell people about the actual menace, so you have a record of your concern.
- And third, you realize your supervisors may or may not have the same level of concern, or first-hand exposure, to the threats you face.



Module 11: Self-Care – Addressing Emotional Trauma

Objective

The purpose of this module is to train young journalists to think about the importance of self-care as they begin their career. Included are emotional self-care techniques and strategies for young journalists to practice as they develop their craft. Journalists are not immune to trauma and they are not expected to be superhuman. Journalists must recognize that when they cover stories, what they witness AND hear becomes a part of them. Journalists need to realize and accept that it is okay to feel the weight of the stories they cover. In the documentary *Jim: The James Foley Story*, photojournalist Nicole Tung describes how journalists become “intimate chroniclers” when covering stories. Journalists’ close proximity to the stories to emerging stories can result in emotional and mental trauma.

Readings

“For Reporters Covering Stressful Assignments, Self-Care is Crucial” Catherine Stifter, *Center for Health Journalism*

<https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/resources/lessons/reporters-covering-stressful-assignments-self-care-crucial>

This article from the *Center for Health Journalism* provides specific examples of stories that caused emotional responses from the journalists covering them. The article provides warning signs that journalists can look for in themselves and in their colleagues as well as strategies for dealing with traumatic experiences.

Discussion Questions

- 1. What is “vicarious stress” or “compassion fatigue”? What are some signs or symptoms?**
“Vicarious stress” or “compassion fatigue” is sometimes experienced by reporters who cover stories of people who are living in very stressful situations, or any emotionally charged reporting situation. Some signs or symptoms include tears, exhaustion, and procrastination.
- 2. What are the coping strategies that Thom Sterling, a clinical social worker, offers to alleviate on-the-job stress?**
 - **Prevent isolation:**
 - Find someone to talk to so you do not feel alone.
 - Keep a journal of emotions, thoughts and experiences.
 - Understand the emotions you feel are normal.
 - **Practice self-care:**
 - Exercise and eat properly.
 - Relax regularly; Get enough sleep.
 - Take some time off.
 - Avoid mood-altering drugs and alcohol.
 - **Practice mindfulness:**
 - Make time for simple activities that you enjoy: go for a walk, listen to music, spend time with a pet, or read a book.
 - Stay in the present, pay close attention to what is actually happening right now.

- Learn a mindfulness technique such as meditation, tai chi or yoga. Or simply focus on your breathing for a few minutes as you inhale and exhale.

3. What are different warning signs to look for when dealing with self-care issues?

- **Physical:** Exhaustion, insomnia, headaches, getting sick more often
- **Behavioral:** Increased use of alcohol and drugs, missing work, irritability, social isolation, impaired ability to make decisions, problems in personal relationships
- **Psychological:** Emotional exhaustion, cynicism, reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy, distancing oneself from friends, family or colleagues, depression, your subjects' stories intrude on your thoughts, dreams and daily activities

“How journalists can take care of themselves while covering trauma” Kari Cobham, *Poynter* (May 29, 2019)

<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2019/how-journalists-can-take-care-of-themselves-while-covering-trauma/>

This article is framed around the experience of Jareen Imam, director of social newsgathering at *NBC News*, in the aftermath of the *Capital-Gazette* shooting. Like first responders, journalists need to make sure they are taking care of their own well-being. This involves coping techniques and being open about the trauma that so many journalists witness and/or experience.

Discussion Question

1. What advice and reminders are offered for dealing with stress, depression, and trauma? Create a list and discuss. What techniques and strategies are the most useful for students (answers will vary)?

- Do not underestimate the power of a good therapist
- Find out if the company you work for has good resources
- There is more to life – and us – than news
- Lean on your village
- Pay attention to your body
- Pay attention to your mind, too
- All coping mechanisms are not created equal
- Look out for your team
- Managers, be the change
- You are not immune
- Make small changes

“How journalists practice self-care while covering tough stories” Elite Truong, *Poynter* (June 22, 2016)

<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2016/how-journalists-practice-self-care-while-working-in-news/>

This article, which includes advice from three experienced writers, is particularly geared towards female journalists and journalists of color. It is a very useful introductory article for providing young journalists with strategies for dealing with the emotional stress they may encounter. The article also briefly touches upon online harassment and criticism, a topic covered in Module 3.

Discussion Question

1. What strategies can journalists, particularly women and journalists of color, employ to deal with the emotional and mental stress they may encounter in their profession?

- **Become part of a community**

- Find a group that you can rely on and lean on.
- **Develop a threshold to better understand what you are able to handle**
The work of a journalist can be physically and mentally taxing. It is important for young journalists to think about the boundaries that they can realistically cover and handle.
- **Maintain a healthy life-work balance**
Young journalists need to find ways to recharge themselves, and to create some separation between their personal and work lives. Time off should be considered time off. This can lead to a discussion about how young journalists manage their time off, especially after covering difficult stories.
- **Be willing to seek out help and/or advice**
Ask questions. Be willing to listen to those you encounter who have experience in your field. If you are unsure or uncertain, it is not a sign of weakness to seek out advice and assistance. In fact, it is a sign of strength to recognize the need for guidance.
- **Recognize your worth; pay it forward**
Journalism is an important profession, and the work young journalists do is valuable. Realize that. Then, be generous when someone has a question for you, or seeks advice from you. In that way, you help build a community of journalists.

“Journalist Self-Care” Mindset: Reporting on Mental Health (includes two videos) (2014-20)

<https://sites.google.com/a/journalismforum.ca/mindset-mediaguide-ca/journalist-self-care>

This brief article introduces the importance of emotional self-care. Embedded in the article are two brief videos. The videos show how reporters can check on themselves to make sure they are processing what they are experiencing.

Discussion Question

1. **Before watching the videos, engage students in a discussion about what they think Karen Pauls means when she says of journalists, “We’re not Teflon.” Why is this important for young journalists to recognize?**

Journalists must recognize that the emotional impact of a story can and will stick with them. It is only human for journalists to be impacted by the stories they cover, and these stories have the potential to stay with them for long a period of time, perhaps forever.

“Covering Trauma: Impact on Journalists” River Smith, Elana Newman, Susan Drevo, Autumn Slaughter, Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma (July 1, 2015)

<https://dartcenter.org/content/covering-trauma-impact-on-journalists>

This resource provides an overview of current research on the occupational hazards for journalists covering traumatic events, the risk factors that aggravate those effects, and some suggestions for mitigating those factors.

Discussion Questions

1. **What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and how does it impact journalists?**

Instructors and students should take some time to discuss what PTSD is and how it can affect journalists and other media members. Journalists are not immune to psychological trauma and should not feel like it is a sign of weakness to acknowledge that certain stories and events have had an impact on them.

2. **What are the risk factors for PTSD, and what are some protective factors for PTSD?**

Instructors and students should generate a list of the risk factors for PTSD and then compare it to the work they do (or intend to do). Being aware of the risk factors is important for young journalists. As students consider the risk factors, they should also start to discuss protective

actions that they can take. Again, young journalists must learn about self-care, and recognize that emotional trauma is real.

“Self Care Tips for News Media” from *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma* (April 30, 2009)

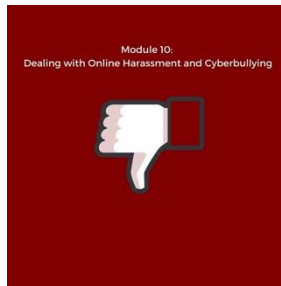
<https://dartcenter.org/content/self-care-tips-for-news-media-personnel-exposed-to-traumatic-events>

This resource from Columbia University’s *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma* provides several tips to assist in fostering healthier newsrooms and better journalism. The advice offered is based on research findings on well-being, resilience, and the practical experience of news professionals in the field.

Discussion Question

- 1. The Dart Center offers a list of self-care tips for journalists. Which of these self-help tips do you think would be most effective during the following phases of an assignment: Before a potentially traumatic assignment? On the job? After the job? What are some common responses immediately after witnessing trauma? Why? Explain.**

Self-care is not a one-size fits all proposition. Starting a conversation with young journalists can help them recognize their strengths and vulnerabilities while opening up the possibility of discussing how to employ these various strategies. Young journalists should understand that they are not expected to be invulnerable, nor can they be.



Module 12: Dealing with Online Harassment and Cyberbullying

Objective

This module aims to ensure students recognize safety risks associated with online harassment and cyberbullying. Most young journalists have grown up with social media as an omnipresent part of their lives and will have at least some familiarity with online harassment and cyberbullying. But how will young journalists react when harassment and cyberbullying – often vicious in nature – is directed at them personally? Journalists must recognize that anonymity on the internet enables mean-spirited, even dangerous trolling without risk to the perpetrators. When should journalists respond, and what should journalists ignore? When should journalists inform the newsroom manager – or authorities – about online harassment? Depending on the diversity in the classroom and the goals of the instructor, this module offers resources that focus on online harassment and cyberbullying of journalists, in general, as well as resources that focus more specifically on female and minority journalists.

Reading(s)

“RSF publishes report on online harassment of journalists” from *Reporters Without Borders* (Aug 1, 2018)

<https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-publishes-report-online-harassment-journalists>

This resource from *Reporters Without Borders* is **geared toward instructors**. This shows how the phenomenon of online harassment is occurring around the world and provides interesting statistics.

Discussion Question

1. What are the three types of online attacks that journalists face?

- **Disinformation:** journalistic content on social networks is drowned in a flood of fake news and pro-government content.
- **Amplification:** the impact of pro-government content is artificially enhanced by commentators who are paid by the government to post messages on social networks or by bots, computer programs that automatically generate posts.
- **Intimidation:** journalists are personally targeted, insulted, and threatened to discredit them and reduce them to silence.

“Patrolling the Trolls: How Journalists Can Cope with Harassment and Threats” Shannon Ramlochan, *Beyond Bylines: Covering the Intersection of Journalism, Emerging Media and Blogging* (June 7, 2015)

<https://mediablog.prnewswire.com/2015/06/17/patrolling-the-trolls-how-journalists-can-cope-with-harassment-and-threats/>

This brief article describes the online harassment that journalists will undoubtedly face and then provides a list of steps that can be taken when harassment occurs.

Discussion Question

1. What five steps do these media veterans suggest journalists who experience online harassment should follow? List and discuss the importance of each step and how to implement each step.

- Have your editor review social media comments
- Make the repercussions for online abuse forceful
- Have a network of industry peers you can rely on in times of crisis
- Keep offenders out of sight
- Do not respond to negativity

“Tips and tools for journalists to deal with online harassment” Natasha Tynes, *IJNET: International Journalists’ Network* (Feb 23, 2018)

<https://ijnet.org/en/story/tips-and-tools-journalists-deal-online-harassment>

This resource from the *International Journalists’ Network* provides steps for dealing with online harassment as well as links to apps that can help with blocking trolls. The brief article also considers ways of distinguishing harassment from criticism.

Discussion Question

1. What advice does Michelle Ferrier of the *Daytona Beach News Journal* have for journalists facing online harassment? List and discuss.

- If threatened with physical harm, go to the police and document the harassment.
- If the criticism is insulting (but not threatening), step away from the computer.
- If your professional reputation is attacked, consider having friends or colleagues provide professional endorsements.
- Potentially consider outing the online trolls. Be aware, there is no conclusive evidence on the success in doing this. You might consider if this is worth the time and effort.

“The column I won’t write because of a troll with a gun” Theresa Vargas, *Washington Post* (July 4, 2018)

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/the-column-i-wont-write-because-of-a-troll-with-a-gun/2018/07/04/0dc6db64-7ee7-11e8-b0ef-fffcabeff946_story.html?utm_term=.409493ab6a3b

Theresa Vargas describes an article about gender, power and motherhood that she has delayed writing because of current dynamics surrounding journalism, including threats from online trolls. Vargas also discusses difficult stories to cover and references the shooting at the *Capital Gazette*.

Discussion Questions

1. Why are women and journalists of color particularly targeted by online trolls? Discuss.

Multiple studies have shown that female journalists and journalists of color are disproportionately targets of online harassment. For instance, Hannah Storm of the *Institute News Safety Institute* notes that female journalists are three times more likely than their male colleagues to experience online harassment. This can lead to a discussion about why women and journalists of color endure more harassment as well as ways of dealing with this reality.

2. What do you think about Vargas’s decision to reply to most emails, even those that contain racist sentiments? Discuss. How would you react/respond to such emails?

This question is open-ended and can be used as a vehicle for discussing how to draw boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Journalists need to develop their own thresholds between what is acceptable and what is not, and when it is appropriate and/or necessary to respond.

“Trolls and threats: Online harassment of female journalists” Maria Ressa, Sagarika Ghose, and Hannah Storm (Contributors), *Al-Jazeera: The Listening Post* (Oct 6, 2018)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/listeningpost/2018/10/trolls-threats-online-harassment-female-journalists-181006101141463.html>

While this resource notes both men and women face online harassment, the primary focus is on how women are particularly targeted and explains the impact this harassment can have on female journalists. The article examines how the harassment women journalists face – about appearance, gender, and sexuality – goes far beyond the harassment most of their male colleagues endure.

Discussion Questions

- 1. According to Hannah Storm, director of the International News Safety Institute, how much more likely are women to be harassed online than men? How does the harassment that female journalists endure differ from what their male counterparts face? Discuss.**

Female journalists are more than three times as likely to face online harassment than their male colleagues. The harassment that women endure tends to focus much more on their appearance, gender, and sexuality.

- 2. According to Trollbusters and the International Women’s Media Foundation, what impact does online harassment have on female journalists? Discuss ways that journalists can deal with this.**

“A recent study by *Trollbusters* and the *International Women's Media Foundation* found that around 40 percent of the female journalists they interviewed had stopped writing about stories they knew would be lightning rods for attacks. Around 30 percent indicated they had considered leaving the journalistic profession altogether as a result of the effect online abuse had had on them.” Instructors are encouraged to open up dialogue about the impact of online abuse on all young journalists. However, the evidence shows women and minority journalists are targeted more frequently and explicitly than their white, male colleagues. This is an issue that should be addressed early.



Module 13: Protecting Sources – Emotional Trauma

Objective

The purpose of this module is to impress upon young journalists the importance of considering the emotional needs of their sources. Journalists not only have a responsibility for their own safety, they have a responsibility for the safety of their sources. This includes taking into consideration their sources' emotional well-being. Journalists must have the best interests of their sources in mind and make efforts to ensure that when covering a story and/or interviewing victims, re-traumatization is avoided and/or minimized.

Reading(s)

“Tragedies & Journalists: A Guide for More Effective Coverage” Joe Hight and Frank Smyth, *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma* (2003)

https://dartcenter.org/sites/default/files/en_tnj_0.pdf

This 16-page guide covers the wide-ranging effects that tragedies can have on all involved. From the newsroom perspective, this includes managers, reporters, photojournalists and everyone in between. Hight and Smyth write, “Reporters, editors, photojournalists and news crews are involved in the coverage of many tragedies during their lifetimes. They range from wars to terrorist attacks to airplane crashes to natural disasters to fires to murders. All having victims. All affecting their communities. All creating lasting memories.” In order to cover tragedies, Hight and Smyth point out that that the three areas to consider are the following: (1) The victims; (2) the community; and (3) the journalists.

Discussion Questions (for each question generate a list and discuss responses)

1. What are tips for interviewing victims?
2. What are tips for writing about victims?
3. What are tips for covering traumatic events in your community?
4. What are tips for taking care of yourself?
5. What are tips for photojournalists who respond to tragedies?
6. What are tips for managing those who cover traumatic events?
7. How can those in the newsroom deal with PTSD?

“When interviewing trauma victims, proceed with caution and compassion” Sherry Ricchiardi, *IJNET: International Journalists’ Network* (Nov 7, 2018)

<https://ijnnet.org/en/story/when-interviewing-trauma-victims-proceed-caution-and-compassion>

This resource from the *International Journalists’ Network* discusses how to proceed when working with sources/victims of trauma. Excellent advice is offered and should serve as a very useful classroom reading to open up discussion on this topic. There is an embedded video, “Getting it right – ethical reporting on people affected by trauma,” where victims and survivors discuss how the media treated them.

Discussion Questions

1. What suggestions are offered by media expert Steve Buttry in terms of approaching trauma victims? List and discuss.

Never assume they will say no; Ask about them, not just what happened; and use third parties

2. What rules does Sherry Ricciardi follow when interviewing trauma victims? List and discuss.

- When approaching a victim, identify yourself as politely as possible before asking questions. Tell them the material could be published.
- Treat each person with dignity and respect.
- During the introduction, simply say, “I am so sorry for what you’re going through” or “I am sorry for what happened.” Let them see that you care.
- Give victims a sense of control. Ask them where they would like to do the interview or if there is somebody they would like to have with them.
- Bottom line: Do no harm.

“Interviewing people who have experienced trauma” Qainat Khan, *The GroundTruth Project* (Dec 26, 2017)

<https://thegroundtruthproject.org/interviewing-people-experienced-trauma/>

This resource from *The GroundTruth Project* provides key considerations for journalists who are interviewing victims of traumatic events. This resource consists of two articles that work well together to inform journalists of best practices when interviewing victims.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the “Six Tips for Interviewing People Who’ve Experienced Trauma”?

- Treat people with respect and gratitude.
- Be human and express empathy.
- Respect boundaries and give the subject their agency.
- If possible, get to know the person before interviewing them about traumatic experiences.
- Do not start an interview by asking about the traumatic event.
- Take care of yourself.

2. In “Thoughts on Interviewing Victims of Trauma,” what are the three things Beth Murphy focuses on in terms of her experiences? What can we learn from these experiences? Discuss.

- No conditions: What does Beth Murphy mean by this? Why is this a good starting point?
- Be trauma-informed: From your perspective, what does it mean to be trauma-informed?
- Choose kindness over story: Why is this important when deciding whether or not to pursue (and publish) sensitive stories?

“Tips for Interviewing Survivors” RAINN, *the nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization* (2019)

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/tips-interviewing-survivors>

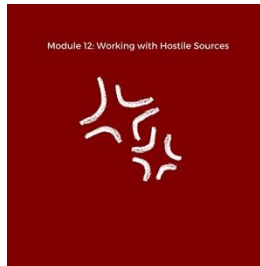
This resource provides helpful information for journalists who interview sexual assault survivors. As noted in this resource, “As journalists continue to cover stories related to sexual assault or abuse, it can be helpful to have a better understanding of how to interview survivors of these type of crimes. A thoughtful approach to the interview can help educate the public and support survivors in sharing their story.”

Discussion Question

1. What are the main things that every journalist should know about how to interview victims of sexual assault? Under each main idea, there are several bullet points. Be prepared to discuss them.

- Before the interview, do your homework.
 - Is the survivor’s experience a good fit for your story?

- Do you need an exclusive on the survivor's story?
 - Are there legal considerations?
 - Can the survivor remain anonymous?
- At the start of the interview, set expectations.
 - Explain how the interview fits into the larger story.
 - Set a time frame.
 - Provide an overview.
 - Be upfront about editorial control.
 - Talk about fact checking.
- During the interview, be respectful.
 - Avoid generalizing.
 - Try not to make assumptions.
 - "Victim" or "survivor"? Ask your interviewee if they have a preference.
 - Be mindful and respect boundaries.
- At the end of the interview, show appreciation.
 - Thank the survivor for sharing their story.
 - Avoid giving advice.
 - Ask for additional input.
 - Discuss next steps.
- When you are writing, do the following:
 - Provide resources.
 - Take care of yourself.



Module 14: Working with Hostile Sources

Objective

As students gain confidence in their interviewing skills, instructors should incorporate instruction in how to deal with hostile sources, especially considering the changing climate where journalists are often targeted and/or harassed. Precaution and preparation are the key. Just like performing a risk assessment before covering a story, journalists should consider in advance how they plan to react if a source gets hostile. Journalists must remember that the purpose of an interview is not to get into a debate with the source, but rather to gather information. Journalists, to the best of their ability, must remain level-headed.

Reading(s)

“The art of the interview: Asking the hard questions about asking the hard questions” Ann Friedman, *Columbia Journalism Review* (May 30, 2013)

https://archives.cjr.org/realtalk/the_art_of_the_interview.php?link

This article from the *Columbia Journalism Review* discusses how to prepare to deal with hostile sources, including asking the hard questions. Eight important steps to asking good questions are provided. In discussing the value of each of these steps, instructors and students can also discuss how to respond if asking hard questions leads to some pushback from sources.

Discussion Question

1. **How can journalists ask the hard questions? Do you agree with these steps? Discuss.**

- Know your subject, come in with a plan, prepare questions, *but* prioritize conversation
- Just come out and ask the hard stuff
- Embrace the silences, think in soundbites, play dumb
- Keep the mic running after you finish

“How to Conduct Difficult Interviews” Mallory Pickett, *The Open Notebook* (Dec 11, 2018)

<https://www.theopennotebook.com/2018/12/11/how-to-conduct-difficult-interviews/>

This resource provides firsthand accounts of conducting difficult, tense interviews. Students should read how these journalists overcame their fears and uncertainties and pushed forward to complete their stories. It is common to feel anxious or nervous before conducting interviews.

Discussion Question

1. **What are Pickett’s “Key Takeaways for Difficult Interviews”? List and discuss**

- (1) Don’t fear the fear; (2) Prepare; (3) Stay calm and stick to the facts; (4) Make every effort to include all voices in your story; (5) No surprises; and (6) Be kind and fair.

“How Do I Handle a Hostile Source?” Joe Grimm, *Poynter* (June 1, 2007)

<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2007/how-do-i-handle-a-hostile-source/>

This brief resource points out that every story is important to someone no matter how innocuous it may seem. For new interns or journalists, this resource provides a succinct response to this question: How do you deal with angry sources?

Discussion Question

1. What advice does this resource offer in terms of dealing with hostile sources?

- Ask source to fill you in on the background. Listen. Ask for clarification. Do not defend.
- Explain, briefly, your desire to understand and to be accurate and thorough.
- Spend enough time so you and the source know each other as individuals, not caricatures.
- Give the source your contact numbers and invite reaction to whatever you write.
- This will take time. But it is a good rehearsal for when you develop a beat of your own.

“Journalists of Color Face Harassment by Sources” Jane C. Hu, *The Open Notebook* (April 9, 2019) – this article appears in Modules 3, 7, and 11

<https://www.theopennotebook.com/2019/04/09/journalists-of-color-face-harassment-by-sources/>

This resource examines the toll that harassment can take on journalists of color by examining how seemingly small “microaggressions” of racism can build up and ultimately wear down those on the receiving end. The resource also delves into the role that editors (and newsrooms) can play in supporting journalists of color.

Discussion Questions

1. How are “microaggressions” defined in this resource? Is there a clear line between these pinpricks of racism and a source being friendly or cordial?

Microaggressions are defined as “subtle prejudiced comments or actions directed at a member of a marginalized group.” These comments or actions often seem innocuous and, taken individually, may not have an impact; however, these microaggressions can build up over time even if the source does not intend to offend. Unfortunately, that does not lessen the impact journalists may feel.

2. How should journalists of color respond?

There is not a “one-size-fits-all” response to this question, especially if the comments or actions encountered are not overtly racist. Some journalists feel it is not worth confronting because responding may risk access to the source; other journalists feel they must confront because making the choice to not to respond proves too difficult to stomach.

3. What role can editors (and newsrooms) play in supporting journalists of color who may be experiencing harassment due to color or race?

Ideally, newsrooms would have protocols in place to deal with all forms of harassment. However, as mentioned, harassment cases all differ so there is not always a “one-size-fits all” solution. Editors and newsroom managers can start by creating a welcoming environment for all employees. Editors and newsroom managers can also proactively reach out to journalists and encourage them to speak about their experiences. Trust is key.



Module 15: Digital Security

Objective

The purpose of this module is to illustrate how important it is for journalists to ensure the security of their electronic devices that store personal and work-related data. Students should develop a heightened awareness about how to protect their data and begin determining the level of security needed in different situations. One thing to keep in mind is that *nothing digital is ever completely safe*. The safest way to get and protect information is to meet face-to-face. Encryption tools may lower the risks and mitigate danger, but they do not prevent them.

Reading(s)

“Digital Safety Kit” *Committee to Protect Journalists* (July 30, 2019)

<https://cpj.org/2019/07/digital-safety-kit-journalists.php>

This Digital Safety Kit is designed to help journalists protect themselves and their digital content from attack. According to the *Committee to Protect Journalists*, “Journalists should protect themselves and their sources by keeping up to date on the latest digital security news and threats such as hacking, phishing, and surveillance. Journalists should think about the information they are responsible for and what could happen if it falls into the wrong hands, and take measures to defend their accounts, devices, communications, and online activity.”

Discussion Question

1. When it comes to digital security, what are some of important things the *Committee to Protect Journalists* suggest journalists should be aware of? List and discuss.

- Protect your accounts
- Phishing
- Device security
- Encrypted communications
- Secure internet use
- Crossing borders

“Tips for digital security” Qainat Khan, *The GroundTruth Project* (June 15, 2017)

<https://thegroundtruthproject.org/tips-digital-security/>

This article from *The GroundTruth Project* points out that digital security is now a basic requirement for all journalists. To provide advice to combat the threat of digital attacks, *The GroundTruth Project* spoke with Tom Lowenthal, staff technologist at the *Committee to Protect Journalists*, who worked on the tech safety chapter of *CPJ’s Journalist Safety Guide*. Lowenthal provides baseline precautions every journalist should take to protect their devices and their communications.

Discussion Question

1. According to Tom Lowenthal from the *Committee to Project Journalists*, what are the baseline precautions every journalist should take to protect their devices and their communications? List and discuss.

- Protect accounts by using a password manager and two-factor authentication
- Protect devices from malware by updating software, securing browser and equipment

- Protect your communications by not using email for secure communications and Signal (<https://signal.org/>) for texted conversations and voice calls. VPNs can be hit or miss.

“Journalism School?: Lessons in security they might not teach at your J-school” *Surveillance Self-Defense*

<https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#assessing-your-risks>.

This reading, Surveillance Self-Defense from the *Electronic Frontier Foundation*, covers “Lessons in security they might not teach at your j-school.” There are 10 clickable lessons that provide information for journalists to take necessary measures to protect their digital data. Depending on the specific subject matter being taught, instructors can pick and choose which of the links to assign to their students.

Here are the topics covered:

1. Security Plan: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#your-security-plan>
2. Communicating with Others: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#communicating-others>
3. Strong Passwords: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#creating-strong-passwords>
4. How to Delete Your Data Securely on macOS: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#how-delete-your-data-securely-macos>
5. How to Delete Your Data Securely on Windows: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#how-delete-your-data-securely-windows>
6. How to Delete your Data Securely on Linux: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#how-delete-your-data-securely-linux>
7. Keeping Data Safe: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#keeping-your-data-safe>
8. Protect Yourself on Social Networks: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#protecting-yourself-social-networks>
9. How to Circumvent Online Censorship: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#how-circumvent-online-censorship>
10. What Should I Know About Encryption?: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/journalism-student#what-should-i-know-about-encryption>

“Five digital security tools to protect your work and sources” Spencer Woodman, *ICIJ: International Consortium of Investigative Journalists* (January 29, 2018)

<https://www.icij.org/blog/2018/01/five-digital-security-tools-to-protect-your-work-and-sources/>

Threats to digital security compound, yet many journalists are failing to take advantage of security safeguards to protect themselves. Spencer Woodman identifies “five security tools that have emerged as among the most commonly recommended for reporters and news organizations as well as their sources.”

Discussion Questions

1. **What are the five security tools that Spencer Woodman identifies that are recommended for journalists and news organizations as well as their sources? List and discuss how to employ these tools.**
 - Signal (<https://signal.org/>) and other end-to-end encrypted apps
 - Secure file storage and encrypted sharing
 - Password managers
 - Two-factor authentication and its innovations
 - Slack alternatives for your office

“Are You Savvy About Digital Security?” Sarah Wild, *The Open Notebook* (August 14, 2018)
<https://www.theopennotebook.com/2018/08/14/are-you-savvy-about-digital-security/>

According to this resource, “Many journalists mistakenly believe that their stories are not sensitive enough to warrant increased digital protection.” This is a misconception. All digital communications, including email, texting, instant messaging, and voice-over-internet services, team collaboration tools, and social media applications, are vulnerable to digital threats, including viruses, eavesdroppers, and hackers. This resource provides useful techniques and strategies to protect digital communications.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the benefit of using the encrypted app Signal (<https://signal.org/>)?

Signal has a strong focus on privacy: Only the sender and receiver have the code to decrypt messages. This app can be set to automatically delete conversations from a specific contact.

2. What is threat modeling? Why is it important in protecting journalists and sources?

According to the Electronic Frontier Foundation (<https://ssd EFF.org/en>), threat modeling is “a way of thinking about the sorts of protection you want for your data so you can decide which potential threats you are going to take seriously. It is impossible to protect against every kind of trick or adversary, so you should concentrate on which people might want your data, what they might want from it, and how they might get it. Coming up with a set of possible threats you plan to protect against is called threat modeling or assessing your risks.” Once journalists identify what they are trying to protect – and from whom – they will be better equipped to protect themselves and their sources.

3. What are the high-impact steps that all journalists should take to protect themselves and their sources from digital attacks? List and discuss.

- Basic Digital Hygiene
 - Use two-factor authentication
 - Spiff up passwords
 - Install updates when prompted
- Encrypt Communications and Devices
- Avoid the Temptation of Pirated Software
- Take Special Care When Crossing Borders



Module 16: Covering Natural Disasters and Weather-Related Events

Objective

The goal of this module is to make sure young journalists are aware of the dangers involved with covering natural disasters and other weather-related events. Covering any type of weather-related disaster can prove to be very difficult for everyone in the newsroom. Young journalists should learn how to protect themselves, and also how to be sensitive to those who are victims of these events. If these are local events, journalists might not only be covering the story, they may be part of the group at risk.

“This is our Super Bowl: why do reporters go into the eye of the storm?” Luke O’Neil, *The Guardian* (Oct 10, 2018)

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/oct/10/reporters-storm-coverage-extreme-conditions>

This article discusses why journalists travel into dangerous weather situations and the risks they face in order to provide reports. As stated in the article, “Destruction and mayhem is simply more interesting for viewers, most of whom are far from the storm themselves, to look at than a talking head simply reading off a list of facts. It’s pretty clear that networks wouldn’t be broadcasting so much of this stuff if there wasn’t a big audience for it.” Instructors and students should be willing to discuss where and when to draw the line when it comes to covering extreme weather.

Discussion Question

1. **Does it set a dangerous example for reporters to cover extreme weather when other people have been asked to remain indoors and, in other cases, ordered to evacuate? Or as Mark Strassman of the *New York Times* asks, “Why would you have reporters standing potentially in harm’s way who are telling people to do exactly the opposite?” Discuss.**

This a valuable conversation for students in the classroom. First, a comparison might be drawn between covering other dangerous events (riots, mob scenes, etc.) and covering dangerous weather disasters (flooding, fire, hurricanes, etc.). Is there a difference? Instructors might also ask students to consider whether journalists have a responsibility to share these stories with the public. And, if so, do they need to be present to tell it?

“Self-Care Amid Disaster” Joe Hight, *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma* (Aug 31, 2005)

<https://dartcenter.org/content/self-care-amid-disaster>

This resource focuses on steps that can be taken by the entire newsroom when covering local disasters and/or weather-related events. This means the newsroom must band together as a team to cover the story. Often, this involves rotating journalists to tend to their own worries and concerns.

Discussion Question

1. **When covering natural disasters or weather-related events, what should all editors and reporters be encouraged to do? List and discuss.**
 - Get away from your desk and take brief breaks.
 - Try deep breathing.
 - Talk to a person that you trust about how you are feeling during these times.
 - Exercise.

- Listen to music. Do your favorite hobby. Go to church. Laugh. Do something that relaxes you or provides you with relief from the pressures.
- Eat right—most difficult for any journalist.
- If you can, get enough sleep.

“Hurricane Reporter’s Checklist” *RTDNA: Radio Television Digital News Association* (Sep 10, 2018)

https://rtdna.org/article/hurricane_reporters_checklist

This resource points out the many responsibilities that newsrooms have when it comes to reporting on extreme weather. According to *RTDNA*, “Journalists have a special responsibility during hurricanes and other severe weather situations with potentially wide impacts to be accurate and to be measured in the tone of their coverage. Newsrooms need to prepare in advance to establish expectations.... [N]ewsrooms should review RTDNA’s coverage guidelines for hurricanes and natural disasters.”

Discussion Question

1. What precautionary measures can journalists, in particular, take as they head toward a storm? List the precautions and then discuss their importance.

- For the car
 - Windshield washer fluid; Fix-a-flat; Portable car battery jumper; Air freshener/damp rid
- Clothing/Personal Items
 - Blankets; Waterproof boots/overalls (if necessary); Extra socks (many); Rain gear (if necessary); Warm clothing/layers
- Equipment
 - Towels; Portable chargers; Battery packs and batteries; Duct tape; Pliers/tool kit
- Personal Care
 - Toilet paper; Baby wipes; Sunscreen; Bug spray; Dry shampoo
- Safety
 - Cash; Important medications and medical information in plastic zipper bags; List of emergency numbers including local law enforcement and Red Cross; Medical kit; Battery-operated weather radio; Flashlights
- Food and water
 - Bottled water – at least three gallons per person; Plastic utensils; High-protein food that does not require cooking: tuna packets, peanut butter, beef jerky
- For reporting
 - Plastic zipper bags for phones and small electronics; Non-lubricated condoms for keeping small electronics like microphones dry; Plastic trash bags and grocery bags for wet items and for keeping items dry; Zip ties for securing equipment; Local maps (paper and downloaded); Pencil and paper

“In a Tornado's Path: Reporting the Spring Storm Season” *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma* (May 2, 2011)

<https://dartcenter.org/content/in-tornados-path-reporting-tragedy#.UZuXTIKELft>

Experts from *Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma* offer tips based on their experiences covering an array of recent natural disasters, including hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and forest fires. This resource also includes several other useful resources from the Dart Center that students can explore.

Discussion Question

1. What advice do the experts from the *Dart Center* offer to journalists who are documenting the emotional, psychological and physical impact of weather-related disaster? List and discuss the importance of each of bit of advice offered.

- People caught up in a disaster have a right to decline being interviewed, photographed or filmed. News professionals in the field and in the newsroom need to respect that right.
- Do not feign compassion – it cannot be faked. Use a supportive phrase like “I’m sorry this happened to you,” rather than “How do you feel?” or “I know how you feel.”
- Thoroughly check facts, names, times and places. Errors are particularly painful to traumatized people mentioned in news stories and cause them unnecessary stress.
- Disaster reports do not need added sensation. Rely on good, solid, factual journalism and a healthy dose of sensitivity.
- Resist “pack” mentality, especially when reporters from many news organizations are on the scene. If possible, pool resources to limit demand on individuals and communities.
- For the families of victims and survivors, their loss, grief and concern are intensely focused and personal. Do not force the timeline: You may get a far better story or image if you hold off a little with those immediately affected.
- Remember that victims, survivors, their families and friends are struggling to regain control in their lives after a devastating experience. Allow them to have some say as to when, where and how they are interviewed. Read back their quotes or replay raw tape; allow them to suggest which photos of a deceased or injured relative should be used.
- Allow vulnerable interviewees to tell you when they need a break, whether they want you to put your notebook down or turn off recording equipment so they can go off the record.
- Remember that people caught up in traumatic circumstances are rarely media-savvy. Explain the media process and how your story/picture/footage is likely to be used. Explain that the material may be reshaped prior to publication, or afterwards, or not used at all. Be honest if you know something is likely to run more than once.

“Weather” Mike Reilley, *Journalist’s Toolbox* (July 12, 2019)

<https://www.journaliststoolbox.org/2019/03/17/weather/>

The Society of Professional Journalists provides an in-depth list of resources to track flooding, rain, storms, hurricanes, volcanoes, droughts, etc. Students should be directed to this website with links to over 200 valuable weather-related resources.

Risk Assessment for Journalists

(modified from Rory Peck Trust: <https://rorypecktrust.org/freelance-resources/safety-and-security/risk-assessment-get-started/>)

Assignment outline

- To identify risks, you need to outline your project. Before beginning your risk assessment, it is important to write an assignment outline. Identify and list the key elements of your project: interviews, travel and actions that are vital to your plans.

Locations and brief schedule

- Where are you going, when, and for how long?

Assignment details

- Give specific details of what you intend to cover to complete your assignment. What will you film, photograph, record, write about to make your piece? Including relevant meetings, sequences, interviews and locations. This is the basic foundation of your risk assessment and will provide a clear idea of what you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it.

Project specific risks

- Is this a sensitive topic?
- Are you covering a high-risk location, activity or event?
- Who will you be meeting, and might they be at risk if they talk to you?
- Is your security threatened by talking to specific people, visiting or working in a specific area?
- More than anything, effective risk management is about asking questions, listening to the answers, and working within the realm of the possible. Seek advice from experienced journalists, if possible.

Travel Risks

- Have you made travel arrangements? Plan and research the safest means of travel.
- Have an alternative plan in case you need to adjust travel arrangements or if you do not feel comfortable with your initial plan.

Profile Risks

- This is not about how you perceive yourself, but how others may perceive you. Be aware of your image and presence online. The same questions apply to those accompanying you.
- Is there an increased risk as a result of your gender, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs or nationality? What about those accompanying you, and how does your profile affect them?

Risk Assessment for Newsroom Managers

(modified from Rory Peck Trust: <https://rorypecktrust.org/freelance-resources/safety-and-security/risk-assessment-get-started/> with input from Mark Zoromski, Director of Student Media, Marquette University)

Before sending a reporting crew into the field, the newsroom manager should complete the following:

Assignment outline

- What is the project?
- Is the story sufficiently newsworthy to justify the risks to our reporting crew?
- Does the situation require that I send a two-person crew to ensure safety?

Location/schedule

- Does the journalist and/or crew know the neighborhood?
- Has a timeline been established for when the assignment will be happening and how long it should take?

Assignment Details

- What will need to be done to complete this project? Provide specific details about your expectations for your journalist and/or crew? This is similar to what is expected when a journalist does his or her own risk assessment.
- Is it situation-safe for live transmission?
- Does your reporter know how to assist your photojournalist by maintaining a broad view of the entire scene while the photojournalist concentrates on collecting images?
- Does the crew know the procedure to stay in contact with the assignment desk?

Project Specific Risks

- Do I need to hire private security?
- Is there a heightened risk due to the equipment my crew needs to carry, and if so, what can I do about it?
- Are there health hazards for the reporting crew? Do they need gloves, respirators, safety masks?
- Is there a need for personal protection equipment (helmet, flak jacket, gas mask etc.)?
- Are sources at risk because of the presence of a journalist and/or crew?

Travel Risks

- Has the crew made travel arrangements?
- Should I send the crew in an unmarked vehicle?
- Does the crew have an evacuation plan?
- Is there an extra key to the news vehicle in possession of a member of the team other than the driver?

Profile Risks

- Is there any heightened risk due to the gender, ethnicity, or nationality of the crew?
- Have I thought about emotional safety of my crew?
- Have you briefed your crew on deciding whether to wear their identification badges in view or hiding them if they want to blend in?

Additional Resources

U.S. Press Freedom Tracker

<https://pressfreedomtracker.us/>

Instructors can refer students to the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker. This nonpartisan website aims to provide reliable, easy-to-access information on press freedom violations in the US, including the number of journalists arrested, physically attacked, equipment seized, stopped at the border, etc. in a given year.

The Journalists of Color Resource Guide, created by Lam Thuy Vo, Disha Raychaudhuri and Moiz Syed with support from *The News Integrity Initiative* at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY.

<https://jocresources.com/>

According to the website, “These resources exist because institutions across the country are failing to address systemic issues. We hope that this is only one of many solutions to building more diverse newsrooms and we encourage institutions across the country to find other ways to empower journalists of color.”

“Rights Groups Urge Authorities to Prevent and Account for Attacks Against Journalists” from *Human Rights Watch* (June 9, 2020)

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/09/rights-groups-urge-authorities-prevent-and-account-attacks-against-journalists#>

“The following statement to governors and mayors across the United States was signed by 17 press freedom, journalism, and human rights organizations, including: Reporters Without Borders, PEN America, the Human Rights Watch, Freedom House, ARTICLE 19, Society of Professional Journalists, International Women’s Media Foundation, the National Press Club, NPC Journalism Institute, the National Association of Black Journalists, the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, the Native American Journalists Association, Radio Television Digital News Association, National Coalition Against Censorship, National Press Photographers Association, Free Press, and Military Reporters and Editors.”

Reporters Without Borders: Safety Guide for Journalists

<https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-publishes-new-version-its-safety-guide-journalists>

In response to the growing dangers for journalists, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) released an updated version of its Safety Guide for Journalists. Produced in partnership with UNESCO, it is available in French, English, Spanish and Arabic.

“Photographers Are Gearing Up for the Republican Convention Like It’s War” Nick Stockton, *Wired* (July 17, 2016)

https://www.wired.com/2016/07/photographers-gearing-republican-convention-like-war/?mbid=social_fb

A report by Nick Stockton for Wired.com on how photojournalists took precautionary measures for the Republican National Convention (RNC). Although precaution is always necessary when covering political conventions, even veteran journalists felt like this was different.

“Some Practical Advice about Covering High Profile News Stories” Mickey H. Osterreicher NPPA General Counsel, NPPA: The Voice of Visual Journalists (2020)

https://nppa.org/sites/default/files/2020_Practical%20Advice%20about%20Covering%20High%20Profile%20News%20Stories%2001-29-20.pdf

Mickey Osterreicher, General Counsel for the National Press Photographers Association, provides important information about safety training and situational awareness for journalists and photographers covering high profile news stories like political conventions and potentially volatile situations.